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BISHOP KEANE.

CATHOLIC ORATORY:

A COMPILATION OF

SACRED AND SUBLIME ORATIONS,

SELECTED FROM

THE SERMONS AND DISCOURSES OF CARDINAL GIBBONS, CARDINAL NEWMAN, CARDINAL MANNING, THE LENTEN LECTURES AND SERMONS OF CARDINAL WISEMAN, ARCHBISHOP RYAN, OF PHILADELPHIA; BISHOP KEANE, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON; BISHOP CONROY, FATHER BUCKLEY, FATHER MERRICK, S.J.; FATHER BRANDI, S.J.; FATHER O'KEEFFE, FATHER LAMBING, AND REV. DR. BRANN. ALSO FATHER MAGUIRE'S "REFUTATION OF HERESIES, AND DEFENCE OF CATHOLIC DOGMA"; BESIDES SERMONS AND ESSAYS OF OTHER EMINENT ECCLESIASTICS.

EMBELLISHED WITH PORTRAITS OF THE AMERICAN AND ENGLISH CARDINALS, AND NUMEROUS BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS.

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Nihil Obstat,

HENRICUS A. BRANN,
CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

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ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

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PREFACE.

It can be said without any deviation from truth that the subjects treated of in this volume transcend all material interests, and concern every person with a soul to save. These Discourses—many of them models of rhetoric—are for the most part expositions of Christian doctrine and prophetic warnings to sinners; and, in their selection, no pains have been spared to gather into one volume the available sermons of most eminent preachers in all English-speaking countries—not a few of whom have acquired world-wide fame. Among the latter, one of the most noted names is that of Cardinal Newman, the brilliant author of the "Apologia," whose own life was an unsullied page that enforces every emanation of his genius, and whose death recently, at a patriarchal age, caused widespread regret throughout the Anglican as well as the Roman Church. His living compeer, the venerable Cardinal Manning—a leader in the temperance cause, and a trusted friend of the laboring masses—is also in the group of great preachers in this work; as, also, the learned Cardinal Wiseman, the eloquent Father Buckley, the famous controversialist Father Maguire; and, amongst our countrymen, Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ryan hold pre-eminent rank. The name of Cardinal Gibbons is almost universally revered by reason of his broad humanity, and his well-proved fealty to the Republic; and his steady adherence to these principles mark him as a most worthy successor of the patriot bishop, Dr. Carroll, in the episcopal chair of Baltimore. Archbishop Ryan, it is generally allowed, takes the foremost place as a pulpit orator in this country at the present day. Speaking of the Archbishop's recent lecture at the Metropolitan Opera-House, New York, a distinguished American statesman and orator who was present, said: "I have never heard a more eloquent, more logical, more entrancing address."

To say any more in this introduction to the work than mention a few amongst the noted names that adorn its pages, and to indicate in a general way the nature of these Discourses, seems entirely unnecessary. We may, however, add, that in regard to the type and binding (on which no expense has been spared), as also the engravings and artistic embellishment in general, the book will, we think, compare favorably with any secular work that has issued from the American press in recent years.

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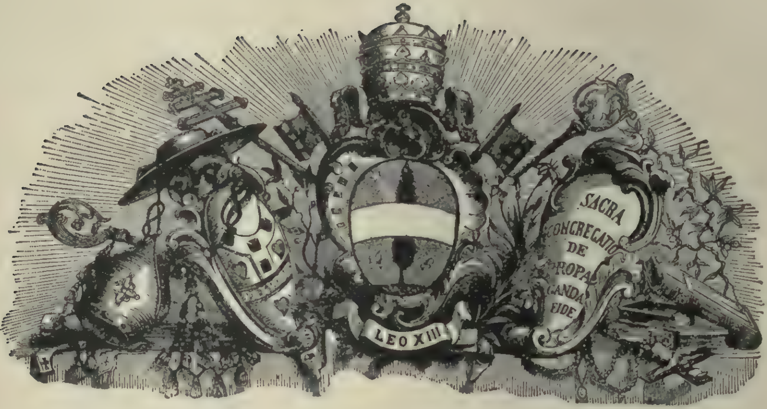
The Publishers.


SACRA
CONGREGATIO
DE
ROPA
GANDA
FIDE
LEO XIII

Publishers' Notice.

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BISHOP KEANE'S DEFENSE OF THE CHURCH

AGAINST THE

ATTACKS OF THE A. P. A.,

AND

ANTI-CATHOLIC MOVEMENTS IN GENERAL.

PERHAPS because of the proverbial inappreciation, which meets a broad benevolence, and possibly because the greatest organizations must always have the greatest number of enemies, the Roman Catholic Church has been, at many, if not all times, in the history of her long work for mankind, the centre of attack from hordes of her ungrateful beneficiaries. While it is far from our intention to offer any defense of the Catholic Church, whose deeds, despite their oft tardy recognition, constitute her greatest justification, it is to be regretted that these attacks upon her have shown even the enlightened present to be no exception, in this regard, to the history of the past. Intelligent inquiry into history must establish indisputably that the light of civilization, and the birth of humanitarianism, had its inception in Rome—the benevolence of whose institutions has so often been stigmatized by malevolence, and the purity of whose intentions and devotion to mankind has so often been smirched with accusations of political design and fraud. Through all this the reliance of the Church has been the certainty of the survival of the fittest, which has borne her up in her arduous task and many privations to the position of her present influence and power.

The right of those vested by the Church with the commission, through divine sovereignty, to care for the welfare, healthfulness, and morality of temporal powers has been constantly perverted to mean her desire for a complete assumption of the civic sword—that sword which Rome has never advised to be drawn save in defense of right, and whose peaceful detention in the diplomacy of the present has been her constant admonition. Doubtless to the incitations of sectarianism more than to any other force are due the enmities which have been aroused against the Catholic Church. Failing in their inability to disprove the righteousness of her cause, zealots for discord, in whose appearance the present affords no exception to the past, have endeavored to assail the works of the

Church by attacks upon the character of such bad Catholics as they were able to find, and whom they held up as typical productions of the wisdom and purity of the Church's work for men.

In nothing more than in her work for education have the intentions of the Church received greater criticism. They have been persistently represented to mean her stealthy encroachment upon the civic power, and her preparation, especially in the United States, of a basis for proselyting the nation. To instance a typical example of the aversion which sectarian bigotry has manifested toward the beneficent work of Catholic education, let us cite the Jesuits, upon whom has been wreaked, most violently of all, the abuse of the Church's enemies, despite the fact that their tireless and arduous labors for mankind, from the days when they taught the savages of the North American forest to the present in which they lead the institutions of learning to-day, have been one long series of privations rather than emoluments, and of persecution rather than of praise. So it is that from her broad policy of education, on through everything the Church has done for men in the Christianization of the world, there have been malign perversions of her purity, resentments against her righteousness, and petty envies of her influence and power.

As Catholic education in the United States seems at present to be the principal point of attack against the work of the Church in America, and the excuse upon which all the charges of subterfuge and plot have been brought against her, let us examine into the spirit and principles which actuate the policy of the Church in the education of the young men and young women of this Republic.

The practical influence of Catholic principles and of the Catholic system of education in forming men can best be judged from the character of the typical men which the Church has already produced. These we may look for in the ranks of our Catholic Bishops. The bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in America are usually a hard-worked set of men, who find occupation enough for their time and energy in looking after the special welfare of their own respective flocks. A few of these bishops, however, are so peculiarly situated as to be placed directly under the eyes of the American people, and have been naturally led to give public utterance to their social principles. Two such typical Catholic bishops it will suffice us to mention from among the body of the American episcopate. They are Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland. No American citizen needs to be informed how thoroughly clear-minded and broad-hearted are these two men, and how absolutely in harmony with the principles of the American Republic are their convictions and their aims.

It would be easy to indicate scores of living laymen of whom the same could be said, but selections, like comparisons, might seem odious. There is not a great metropolis in our land in which there are not Catholic citizens thoroughly identified with their Church in its beliefs and its practices, and at the same time recognized by their fellow-citizens as typical exponents of all that is best and purest in our American civilization. If, on the other hand, the American people can point to certain of these, here and there, who are not an honor or a help in our public life, the Catholic Church, upon her part, can point to many and many a pronouncement of her own in which the principles and the policies of these men are repudiated and denounced. Fair-minded men must judge the Church, not by what some Catholics do in spite of their religion, but by what those Catholics do who are recognized as typical churchmen in conformity with the principles and teachings of their religion.

An analysis of the Catholic system of education shows the entire construction of its vast fabric to emanate from the following seven cardinal principles:

1. The basis of modern civilization is the philosophy of the Christian religion, in its teaching concerning man, God, and the relations of man with God, and men with each other. It has been attempted by philosophers of the school of Gibbon and Hume to disprove this great truth, but their efforts have been futile, and experience has demonstrated the contrary.

2. No reasonable man doubts that the chief agency in the development of civilization is proper education.

3. But that education should develop a sound and lasting civilization, it must have the Christian religion as a pervading element.

4. On the other hand, education is inseparable from scientific research and the advancement of knowledge. Some have imagined or pretended that this is inconsistent with the Christian religion, but we know that this is not true, and that, on the contrary, every truth and fact of nature illustrates the supernatural. Science logically leads us to philosophy, and philosophy to religion. This very statement has been lately proclaimed by the Marquis of Salisbury, president of the British Academy, speaking from the standpoint of science, in his last annual address.

5. Hence, any system of education involving the exclusion of the Christian religion is illogical, and must prove practically pernicious. This is especially true of higher education, since popular thought will always be largely molded by the most learned.

6. From all this it follows that the chief need of our times, both in view of logical, sound education and in reference to genuine civilization and the safeguards of wise social institutions, is the establishment of higher or university education, in which zeal for the very deepest scien-

tific research, and for the very farthest advances in learning, will be coupled with equal zeal for the Christian religion.

7. Finally, it is manifest to all impartial observers that the world's advance body in civilization is led by the United States. Here, then, more than anywhere else in the world, it is important that popular education, and especially higher or university education, should be thoroughly impregnated with the soundest Christian philosophy. It is this earnest conviction and this object nearest the heart of the broad-minded Leo XIII., that have led him, seconded by the practical wisdom of our bishops, to establish, in the nation's capital, the great Catholic University of America. The very location of this university in Washington was intended as a permanent monument of the faith of the Roman Catholic Church in the righteousness of American institutions, its profound conviction of the harmony between the principles of the great American Republic and the principles of the Catholic religion—the old religion of Jesus Christ, the mother of modern civilization—and its belief that the principles of these institutions are inseparably bound up with the future welfare of the world.

Much comment has, I believe, been passed upon the establishment, by the Catholic University of America, of its divinity school prior to the initiation of the work of its secular branches, and this has been falsely represented to bear significance of a deep-laid plot on the part of the Roman Catholic Church for the proselytization of the American people. I wish to say that the sole reason for the establishment of our faculty of divinity before our other divisions can be found in the statement that since the fundamental conception of a university requires that it teach all possible about God, man, and nature, we have commenced with the teaching about God in the conviction that the higher should logically precede the lower forms of knowledge, and that the omission of any form would mar the universality of Catholic education. Moreover, the Pope and his representatives, the bishops, feel confident that the great cause of Catholic education in America must commend itself to the sympathies not only of intelligent Catholics, but of all our citizens, whatsoever their denominational creed, who believe that the welfare of our country and of the world depends upon the intimate union of the Christian religion with the highest and broadest of culture.

The teachings of the Catholic Church, that the substance and the light of civilization is to be found in the spread of Christian education, have resulted in the enlistment under its banner of as devoted and self-sacrificing an army of workers as were ever organized in any cause.

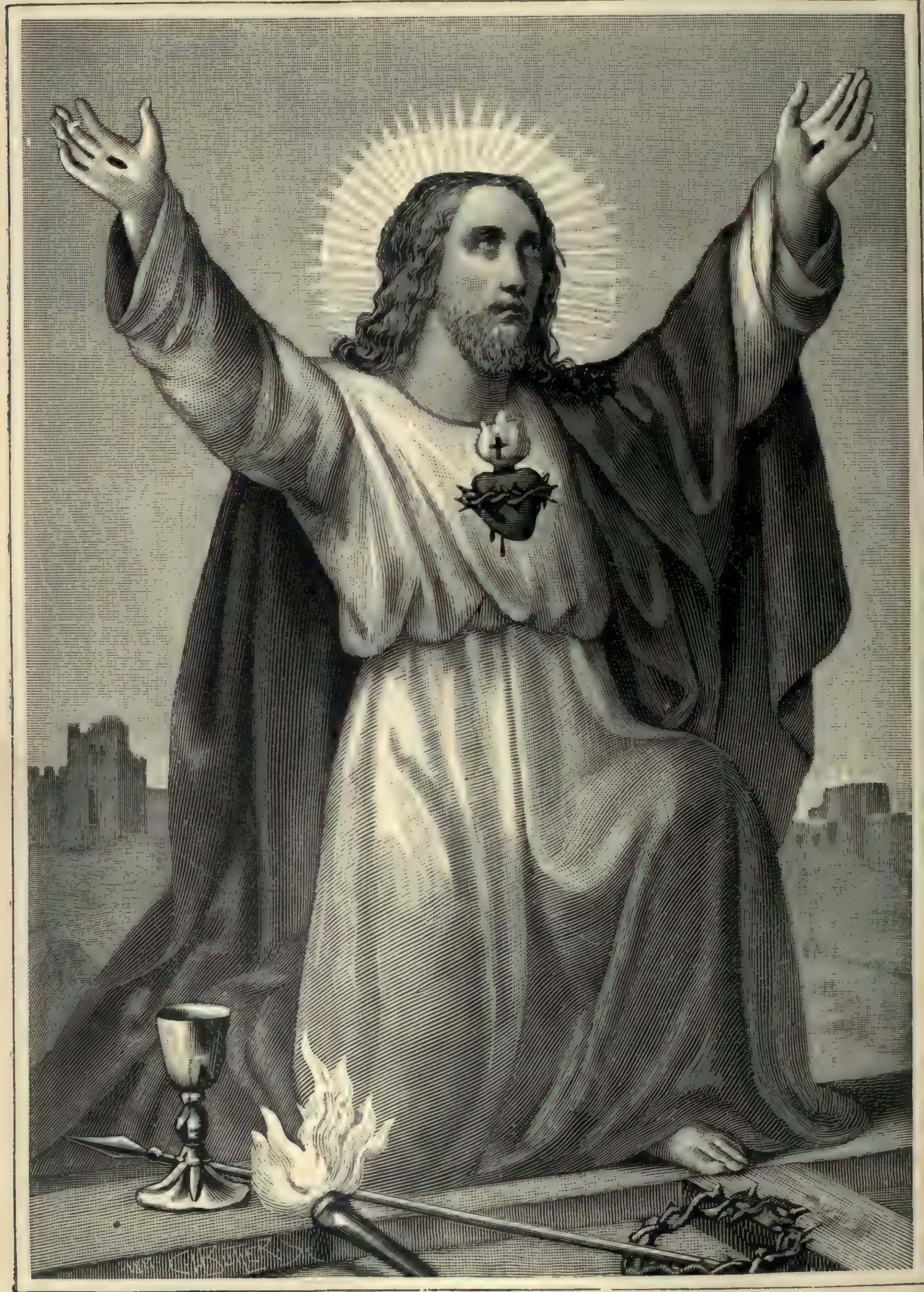
Few more touching examples of devotion to the progress of education can be found in the biography of its greatest friends than have been witnessed in the act of the venerable Mgr. McMahon in devoting his entire fortune of nearly $400,000 to the building of a home for philosophy and literature in the Catholic University of America, where he is now spending his last honored days after an active pastorate of forty years in New York City. This is but a single instance of the unselfish zeal which marks the adherents of this noble cause, and Americans should find satisfaction in the knowledge that, while the secular departments of the Catholic University of America know no distinction of creed to either students or professors, their teachings will never be found to countenance or compromise with the schools of agnosticism, materialism, and infidelity.

Perhaps in few things have the position and policy of the Catholic Church been more persistently misrepresented than in allegations concerning its political purposes, which have flooded the sectarian press during the past few years. The Catholic Church has no political purposes. It neither countenances nor wishes for any political position, distinction, or influence. There is absolutely no relation between the Church and any political party. Prominent Catholics are Democrats, and prominent Catholics are Republicans, simply according to the view they may take of the great centripetal and centrifugal tendencies in which consists the harmony of our governmental system. Neither in the private recognition of their Church nor in the public example of its Christian citizenship are they either better or worse Catholics for the views which they hold concerning these great principles and tendencies of our commonwealth. Men are good Catholics if they hold and follow the principles of the Church, and they are bad Catholics if they have permitted corruption to separate, to estrange them from its principles. The secular position and affinities of any Catholic, aside from his observance of the moral law, are matters entirely extraneous to his religious faith, and any assumption to the contrary is repudiated both by the teachings of the Church and the practice of its consistent members.

Our country has lately witnessed an outburst of sectarian animosity against the Catholic Church in a mass of heterogeneous movements arising here and there, which have finally crystallized themselves in a most un-American organization, ruled by the reprisals of intolerance, recruited by the spirit of revolution and rallied as the "A. P. A." Such movements are no new thing, either in the history of our Church or in the history of our country. Bigotry ruled in the land before our War of Independence, and even since the genius of America has quenched its shameful and destructive flames, a few scattering firebrands have every now and then appeared, endeavoring to rekindle afresh that conflagration whose lurid fires once flamed against the night of superstition in the times of the Salem witchcraft. It is this malign spirit of disorder which is now once more asserting itself in political or semi-political movements, which have for their beginning a thrust at the Christian religion, and for their ultimate design the disintegration of our society. It is strange that any intelligent man could listen to these harbingers from the religious ghostlore of the past, or could give to such inflammatory efforts the dignity of supposed political importance.

The American people do not need to be reminded of the character and history of "Know-Nothingism," and of their final indignant refutation of it, which has rendered the very name of its disciples the synonym and symbol of ignorance. Something of the same kind is now showing itself in this new movement of the American Protective Association and working, be it said, with an energy worthy of a better cause, to set citizen against citizen through the agency of bigotry, prejudice, and sectarianism. It but gladdens my heart to see how fiercely they work in their bad cause, for the louder their outcries, the more inflammatory their utterances and malignant their exertions, the sooner will they show to the American people the shamefulness of their heartless, unchristian policy. I say more power to them, for power ill-gotten is soonest spent, and unrighteous revolution must always run the shortest course. Let them do their worst, for the sooner that worst appears the sooner will the miserable spirit which actuates their efforts become plain to our citizens and settle their cause forever. I have no fear at all as to what the future will be. Believing, as I do, absolutely, in the genius of American principles and institutions, I know that these men and their policy are not the outgrowth of the liberal genius of America, nor are they the children of its harmony and freedom ; and I know that their career, even though it be violent, must be short-lived and end in the ignominy it deserves. I am convinced that the whole movement now known as that of the A. P. A. is simply the outcome of imported British Orangeism, in alliance with the small lingering element of ultra New England puritanism, in which the intolerance of the former has fused with the worst forms of the superstition of the latter. This poor thing is making desperate efforts to secure a place in the struggle for existence, but in the very laws of nature, which demands the survival of the fittest, it must soon be destined to despair.

These parasites upon the social body will always vanish in due course of their own accord if left to the purifying influence of the life-blood of our Republic. They will become fewer as our civilization progresses, until it attains a point where none of these isolated handfuls of revolutionists can raise a concourse large enough to secure the most passing attention in their dissent from the laws of social order and development.



Desires of the Sacred Heart.

WHY AM I A CATHOLIC?

ANSWERED BY REV. S. M. BRANDI, S. J.

A CONCISE, LOGICAL, AND LEARNED ARGUMENT, IN WHICH HE PROVES THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE ONE AND ONLY TRUE CHURCH.

IT is clear that my answer to the question, "Why am I a Catholic?" must shape itself according to what I conceive to be the religious position of my interrogator. I cannot well state a case until I know what I may take for granted, nor can I begin a line of proof until I know how far back my demonstration is expected to go. This is indeed the chief difficulty which presents itself to one who undertakes to formulate, in a few pages of a review article, his reasons for the faith that is in him. Fortunately, however, in the present instance, I am freed from this embarrassment by the limits assigned by the editor. I am not supposed here to address myself to infidels, but to Christians, and "while assuming what is common to all—faith in the Christian revelation—briefly to explain the reasons why I chose to enter, or preferred to remain in the Church to which I belong."

Supposing, therefore, the fact of revelation, I assume that whoever admits the existence of the Christian religion, and its importance, will, of course, admit that the profession of it, as taught and defined by Christ, is not a mere matter of choice. It stands to reason that religion, if once defined by the Supreme Legislator, is, as so defined by Him, of strict obligation. Hence it is not optional with believers in the Christian revelation to adopt any form of religion they please, or, to use the words of a well-known Unitarian writer, "to make their own formula of belief or conviction, or to make none."

Christian revelation assures us that Jesus Christ taught but *one* religion, and that He made the belief and practice of it a divine law. In virtue of that supreme power which He had in heaven and upon earth, He gave to His Apostles, whom He specially called and chose from among the many disciples that surrounded Him, the divine mission

He had received from His Heavenly Father, "As the Father hath sent me, so also I send you." He commanded them to go and preach *His Gospel* to all nations, to teach them "to observe *all* things whatsoever He had commanded them" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Nay, He made the belief in His Gospel, as *preached* by His Apostles, an essential condition for salvation, emphatically declaring that "he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). The doctrines, therefore, of this one religion, taught us by Christ through His Apostles, are the objects of our belief; its precepts alone have the power to bind our will.

Moreover, as Christ taught but *one* religion, so He established but *one* Church: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build *my Church*" (Matt. xvi. 18). He always speaks of "His Church," never of "His Churches"; and the different types employed by Him and His Apostles to denote the Church, necessarily imply the same *oneness*. It is a "fold," a "kingdom," a "body," etc., not invisible, but visible, founded for the purpose of carrying out His own visible mission among all men to the end of time. To this Church He committed the sacred trust of His religion (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), and promised that in teaching His Gospel it should be directed by the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 16); that "the gates of hell should not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18), because it should have His own divine assistance "all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 21). These words are addressed to the Apostles not merely as individuals; for, as such, they were not to live "all days, even to the consummation of the world"; but inasmuch as they, with their lawfully appointed successors, form one moral body instituted by Christ to perpetuate on earth His own divine mission. And because of this His own unfailing assistance, He could say to His *Church:* "He who heareth *you* heareth *me*, and he who despiseth *you* despiseth *me*" (Luke x. 16). "He who doth not hear the Church let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). The Church, therefore, is His organ, His voice, His representative. Hence, as we are not free to embrace any religion we please, but must embrace His religion, so to this one Church, which He established, and to no other, we must belong in order to be saved. The Church is "the body of Christ' (1 Cor. xii. 27). Whoever, then, is not a member of this Church is not in union with Christ, the head.

Hence, to the question proposed as the heading of this paper, "Why am I a Catholic?" my answer is plain: I am a Catholic, because a careful examination of the nature and notes or characteristic marks of the religious society founded by Christ convinces me, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the Catholic Church is the one true Church established on earth by Jesus Christ.

There can be no doubt that if Jesus Christ obliges all men to "hear the Church" which He established, and, consequently, to obey her, and to be subject to her, He must have given all men the means to know her with certainty. He must have impressed upon her certain prominent characteristics, by which she could be clearly recognized as the divinely authorized teacher of men, to lead them in the way of truth and salvation. His perfect justice required it; otherwise He would have given a command, without making its fulfillment possible. As we admit, therefore, that He obliged us to hear His Church, we are bound to admit also that he gave His Church these distinctive notes or marks by which she can be recognized.

But what are these important marks by which all ages have infallibly recognized the true Church of Christ? They are well known. Thus the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, which are so peculiarly sacred to all Christians, and which "may be proved by the most certain warrants of Holy Scripture" (8th of 39 Art. of the Church of England), expressly affirm the existence of these marks. They are four—Unity, Holiness, Catholicity, and Apostolicity. "*I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.*" These four marks, therefore, when found together, manifest the Church which all ages have recognized as the true Church of Christ—the Church in which our forefathers believed.

Now all these marks I find nowhere except in the Catholic Church. Therefore, I must conclude that the Catholic Church is the only true Church of Christ.

A mere glance at the profession of faith of the Catholic Church, at her catechisms, or theological treatises, at her books of instruction as they are published in various countries, will suffice to show that her members "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And as they have but one Lord and one baptism, so also they have but one faith (Eph. iv. 3, 5). "They are," as Tertullian well said of the primitive Christians, "each what all are and all what each is." Catholics, however far apart in time and place, however separated by conflicting interests, inclinations, or national prejudices, are all intimately united in religion, and constitute one great people, one fold, one kingdom, professing the same doctrines, and acknowledging one supreme authority, viz.: the authority of the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ, and the Successor of St. Peter.

This twofold unity of faith and government is an essential property of the true Church of Christ. And, indeed, if the members of Christ's mystical body were not animated by the same faith, how could they be said to be "members of member," or, as we may read in the revised version, "severally members thereof"? (1 Cor. xii. 27). How could their unity be compared to that which exists between the Eternal Father and His Divine Son, and be a proof to the world of the divinity of Jesus Christ? (John xvii. 20, 21). And if the Church were not one in government, how could it be said to be a kingdom? A kingdom necessarily conveys the idea of a society strictly one, and this implies one supreme authority. It is a fact, moreover, that our Lord ordained that His Church should have one universal pastor. It was to Peter alone that He addressed these words: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona . . . . and I say *to thee*, that thou art Peter (Cephas), and upon this rock (Cephas) I will build my Church, ... and I will give *to thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). That Peter is "the rock" is not only evident from the context and the common interpretation of the Fathers, but is also admitted by the most learned Protestant commentators. Thus Bloomfield (Comm. in loc.) testifies that this is the interpretation of "almost every modern (Protestant) expositor of any note." I cannot better explain the relation of Christ and Peter, as foundations of the Church, than in the words of St. Leo (A.D. 440): "As my Father has manifested My divinity to thee," he says, paraphrasing Christ's address to Peter, "I make known to thee thy excellences: for thou art Peter, that is, as I am the inviolable Rock, who maketh both one, I, the foundation, other than which no one can lay; nevertheless, thou also art a rock, because thou art strengthened by my power, so that those things which belong to me by nature are common to thee with me by participation" (Serm. 4 de Assumpt.) And Christ fulfilled His promise, for, as St. John relates in the twenty-first chapter of his Gospel, our Saviour, after His resurrection, addressing the same Apostle, committed to him the care of His Church. "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." St. Ambrose (A.D. 370) declares that Christ appointed Peter to feed the lambs and the sheep, "in order that He, who was the more perfect, might hold the government" (in Lucam. l. 10, n. 176). St. Jerome (A.D. 385) assigns the reason why our Lord constituted a head for His Church. "One is chosen amongst the twelve, that a head being established, the occasion of schism may be removed" (Ad Jovin l. 1, n. 26); and St. Optatus (A.D. 368), addressing the Donatists, says that the Episcopal chair in the city of Rome was bestowed first upon Peter, "head of the Apostles, whence he was called Cephas," and that "in communion with that chair unity was to be preserved by all." The Catholic Church preserves this communion with the chair of Peter, the See of Rome, and this is the reason why it is commonly called "The Roman Catholic Church."

In the Catholic Church, again, I find that holiness which must characterize the true Church of Christ. By her doctrine and the administration of the sacraments the true Church of Christ is to carry on the work of Christ, and so attain the end for which she was instituted—the sanctification of her members. And this is precisely what the Catholic Church does.

Let me take, for instance, her doctrine concerning the sacraments, and it will clearly appear how, by her ministry, she sanctifies every stage and condition of life. She teaches that we are born in a state of sin (Rom. v. 12), and, therefore, that before we can live the life of grace, we must be purified from our guilt—we must receive a spiritual birth (John iii. 5). And this she gives us by means of the Sacrament of Baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19). After being spiritually born our life of grace is but weak. We are, indeed, Christians, but we have to become strong and perfect Christians; and we are made such, she teaches us, by receiving from her the Sacrament of Confirmation (Acts viii. 15, 17). Furthermore, as in temporal life, so also in the spiritual, we stand in need of nourishment—our souls must be frequently fed with "the bread of life" (John vi. 48); and this she gives us in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which, as we know again from her divine teaching, is the true body and blood of Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine (John vi. 51, 52; Matt. xxvi. 26–28). But to be perfect is not human. We are liable to fall into sin and lose thereby the state of grace. We stand in need, therefore, of some healing remedy for sin. This necessary remedy she provides for us in the Sacrament of Penance, in which, by the priest's absolution, given to us by the authority of Christ delegated to him (John xx. 22, 23), joined with contrition, confession, and satisfaction, the sins which were committed after baptism are forgiven. Again: the Church knows that it is at the time of our death that we are in the greatest spiritual need. Weakened by disease, we are less able to withstand the attacks of the enemy of our salvation. This special assistance which we need then she communicates to us in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the anointing of the sick mentioned by St. James (v. 14, 15). In religion, to sanctify ourselves we stand in need of spiritual teachers and guides—of men who are "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1); and these are supplied, together with the powers and graces necessary for them, by the Sacrament of Holy Orders (2 Tim. i. 6). And, finally, she sanctifies the married state by the Sacrament of Matrimony, which she considers as the emblem of that sacred union which exists between Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 25, 32). This, she teaches us, has been instituted to give to married persons the graces required for the fulfillment of their duties and for the religious training of their children.

Assisted by the Holy Ghost, who gives efficacy to her ministry, the Catholic Church is ever gathering new members into her fold, and implanting in them the principle of supernatural life, and by the practices of devotion she inculcates, she fosters that life in all. And if some of her children are not actually saints, it is only because they do not live in accordance with their faith. In fact, in every age and in every land, she has been and is the fruitful mother of saints, and thousands of her sons and daughters renounce all worldly honors and enjoyments, in order to consecrate all that they have, and all that they are, to the service of God and of their fellow-men, always ready to lay down their lives for them. Witness those heroic men who vowed to attend the lepers, and bear the awful consequences of their self-devotion; witness those who solemnly vowed to remain in slavery themselves, if they could not otherwise redeem the captives; witness those many priests and sisters of charity who lay down their lives in every epidemic. In a word, with an activity and zeal for souls, which even her enemies are forced to admit, the Catholic Church leaves nothing undone for the conversion of sinners, for the instruction of the ignorant, for the relief of the poor of Christ. Her many missions in every land, her schools of every degree for the rich and poor, her books of devotion in every tongue, her hospitals, asylums, and charitable institutions of every kind, are so many proofs of her untiring zeal in fulfilling her divine mission to bring all to Christ.

The true Church of Christ has always been and must always be "Catholic" according to those words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the holy Catholic Church." Hence we find the term Catholic used by the Fathers as a distinctive mark of the true Church. St. Ignatius (A.D. 107), writing to the Church of Smyrna, says: "Where the bishop is, there let the multitude of believers be; even as where Jesus Christ is, there is the *Catholic* Church." This catholicity of the true Church, instituted by Christ, is threefold—catholicity of extension, "going teach *all nations*"; catholicity of doctrine, "teaching them to observe *all things*"; catholicity of duration, "I am with you *all days*, even to the consummation of the world." Catholicity, then, implies a multitude of members spread throughout the whole world, in all ages, and professing the same doctrines. Now this is exactly what I find in the Church to which I belong. Her members far outnumber all the other Christian denominations taken together. According to the London *Scientific Miscellany*, there are over 254,000,000 Catholics. These are spread all over the world, so that there is no civilized or savage country known where the Catholic Church is not actually established, and carrying out the work of Christ. "The Catholic Church is so called," says St. Augustine, "because it is diffused throughout the world" (Ep. 52, ad Sever. n. 1). Catholics can repeat to-day what Tertullian (A.D. 199) said of the Catholics of his time, "We have filled every place, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camps, your tribes, companies, palaces, senate, forum! We leave you but your temples" (Apol. 22). And what is more important, the Church so diffused holds everywhere the same faith, has the same constitution, the same sacraments, the same form of government. She is Catholic as she is one. To the question, then, "Why am I a Catholic?" I might well answer in the words of St. Augustine: "Many things detain me in the bosom of the Catholic Church. . . . . The name itself of the Catholic Church keeps me: a name which, in the midst of so many heresies, this Church alone has, not without cause, so held possession of, that while all heretics would fain have themselves called Catholics, yet, to the query of any stranger, 'Where is the meeting of the Catholic Church held?' they would not dare to point out their own basilica or house" (C. Ep. Fund., c. 4).

By "Apostolic Church" is meant the Church which Christ established by means of His Apostles, whom, as the Gospels tell us, He selected, instructed, ordained, and commissioned to perpetuate among men to the end of time His divine mission. The Church, then, to be Apostolic, must be *the Church* established by the Apostles, that is, it must have an *Apostolic* origin, it must teach the *same doctrine* which the Apostles taught, and her ministers must derive their authority from those same Apostles.

That the Catholic Church has an Apostolic origin is a fact which cannot be questioned. Dr. Lardner, a Protestant writer, speaking of the foundation of the Church of Rome by St. Peter, assures us that "this is the general, uncontradicted, disinterested testimony of ancient writers in the several parts of the world," and he adds, "it is not for our honor, nor for our interests, either as Christians or Protestants, to deny the truths of events ascertained by early and well-attested tradition" (Works, vol. 6, p. 253, Lon., 1838). "It is the universal testimony of tradition," says Dr. T. Schaff, "that Peter labored last in Rome" ("Hist. of the Ap. Church," p. 362, N. Y., 1853). And Dr. Whiston, another Protestant, speaking of the same subject, expresses himself in a still stronger way. "This is so clear," he says, "in Christian antiquity, that it is a shame for a Protestant to confess that it has ever been denied by Protestants" ("Memoirs," London, 1750). It will suffice, then, to cite a few testimonies from the early doctors of the Church. Thus St. Cyprian calls the Roman See the "See of Peter" (Ep. 55, n. 14). St. Jerome calls Pope Damasus "the Successor of the Fisherman," and his chair "the chair of Peter" (Ep. 15, n. 2). And St. Augustine calls Linus, the Roman Bishop, "the Successor of St. Peter" (Ep. 53, n. 2).

A careful examination, moreover, of the doctrines of the Catholic Church will prove clearly to any unprejudiced mind, that she teaches *whole* and *entire* the very same doctrines that were taught by the Apostles. This I find to be admitted by Protestants themselves, at least as far as it concerns those points, which they call "fundamental" or "the original elements of the Gospel." See ex. gr. Hodge "Systematic Theology" (p. 3, c. 17, § 3), and Hopkins, "End of Controversy Controverted" (Lett. 19). What they try in vain to prove is, that the Catholic Church, together with those doctrines, has taught many errors, that she has added many new points of doctrine to the original deposit of faith. I have diligently examined each and every one of these points, and the result of this study has been to convince me the more, that the so-called additions are not new articles of faith, but only *authoritative declarations* of the teaching Church that the doctrines in question had been revealed to the Apostles, and had come down to us either by Scripture or Tradition.*

The last condition required for the Apostolic Church is an Apostolic ministry, that is, ministers who derive their powers from the Apostles, and are in communion with the centre of unity which Christ established, and from which they derive their mission. The necessity of this communion with the centre of unity is evident from the few remarks already made on the unity of the Church. In confirmation of this, it will be enough to quote here two of the many authorities I have examined on this subject. St. Optatus speaking of "the chair of Rome, in which Peter sat," tells us that "in communion with this chair unity is to be preserved by all." And that great saint and doctor of the Church, St. Jerome, thus addresses the Bishop of Rome, Pope Damasus: "I speak with the Successor of the Fisherman, and the Disciple of the Cross. Following no chief but Christ, I am joined in communion with your beatitude, that is, with the chair of Peter. On that rock I know that the Church was built. Whosoever shall eat the Lamb outside that house is profane. Whosoever does not gather with *you* scattereth" (Ep. 15, n. 2).

It is an historical fact, which no scholar has ever denied, that the priests and bishops of the Catholic Church can trace their lineage back to an Apostolic origin. This is clearly demonstrated by following the succession of pontiffs from St. Peter to Leo XIII., in the Apostolic See of Rome, with which centre of unity no other priesthood but that of the Catholic Church is in communion. I may add, also, that those denominations which lay any claim to apostolicity of orders, as, for instance, the Church of England, and its daughter, the Episcopal Church in the United States, found this their claim on the fact of having received these orders from bishops that had been in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Again, therefore, with St. Augustine, I answer that I am a Catholic because "In the Catholic Church . . . . the succession of priests from the See itself of the Apostle Peter [Rome] even to the present Episcopate, holds me" (Contr. Ep. Man. n. 2).

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* I may be permitted to refer the reader to "The True Faith of our Forefathers" (American News Co., N. Y., 1882), where he will find the result of this investigation.

But, once more, if I consider the express will and purpose of Christ in establishing His Church on earth, I find that she shall continue to the end of time, unchanged in her internal and external constitution, and possessing all the very same gifts, marks, etc., with which she was endowed by her Divine Founder. For the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ, "to save souls." She must last, therefore, as long as there are souls to save. She is built on a rock, and "the gates of hell shall never prevail against her." Hence it is impossible for her ever to become corrupt in her faith, in her sacraments, or in her government. For the moment she should fail in any of these, that moment the gates of hell would have prevailed against her. To assert that at any time the Church of Christ failed is to deny the truth of Christ's promise to His Church, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." "There are some," St. Augustine tells us, "who say: she that was the Church of all nations, is already no more; she has perished. This say they who are not in her. The impudent assertion!" (Ps. 101, serm. 2, n. 8.) If, therefore, the Church cannot fail or become corrupt, there can be no reason for any reformation in her faith, her sacraments, or government. Every attempt at such reformation is an explicit denial of her indefectibility.

But if the true Church of Christ was to last the same "all days," even to the end of the world, then it has always been in existence, from the days of the Apostles to our own. It existed, therefore, when Luther and Calvin and Henry VIII. raised the standard of revolt against the Catholic Church, in which they were baptized and educated; it existed when each established a separate and independent Church of his own. And if it existed, it could be no other than the Roman Catholic Church. For it is a fact that, at the time, there existed no other Church distinct from her, and recognized by the Reformers as the true Church of Christ.

It is evident, therefore, that the "Reformers," and consequently those who have followed in their footsteps, have no divine authority to preach, to administer the sacraments, and to govern Christ's mystical body. They certainly did not receive it from the Catholic Church, from which they were separated, and by which they were condemned. Luther was a priest, but never a bishop. Calvin was a simple cleric, and never received the order of priesthood. Henry VIII., "the spiritual head" of the Church of England, was a layman. By whom, then, were they sent?

And "how can they preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. x. 15). Did they receive an extraordinary mission from God himself? But where are their credentials, where their proofs? No account of these has ever come to light. And it seems plain enough to me, at least, that they all could not have been sent by the same God to preach contradictory doctrines and vilify each other. Henry VIII. wrote against Luther, Luther against Calvin, and Calvin against both.

As this subject is of vital importance, I will consider my position as stated above from another point of view, briefly touching on a point of doctrine characteristic of the Catholic Church.

My reason for being a Catholic is drawn from the fact that the Catholic Church, *i. e.*, the Church in communion with the Successor of St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome, is the true Church of Christ. This I briefly proved, by showing that she possesses all the notes, which must, according to the intention of Christ, characterize His Church, and distinguish it from every other society. I now add, that since I am obliged to be a Christian in order to be saved, and since the choice is only between Catholicity and Protestantism, if I were not a Christian Catholic, I ought to be a Christian Protestant. Now is it proved that Christian Protestants constitute the Church of Christ? This should be *one* in faith and government; its members should be so united as to be "members of member" and constitute one body, one kingdom, one fold. In vain do I look for this unity among Protestants. They do not constitute one church, but many independent churches. They have not "one faith" or creed, but many creeds. And no wonder, for there no unity of faith can be found where the only principle of this unity is denied, and a principle is set up in its place which necessarily causes dissension. This false principle is their rule of faith. As long as they are told that every man has the right and duty to interpret the Scriptures for himself, as long as the private interpretation of the Bible is to settle all religious controversies, so long will religious division be perpetuated, not only among different denominations, but even among the members of the same denomination. If Washington and his colleagues in promulgating the Constitution of this Republic had said, "Let each one read this Constitution for himself, explain it for himself, and follow out in practice his own interpretation of it," we certainly should not be "known and read of all men" as one united nation. In its stead, we should have had a thousand different political sections and petty governments. How did these great statesmen guard against this danger? They framed the Constitution, and at the same time established a supreme tribunal, and an authoritative power, which should interpret its meaning ultimately and definitively, by whose decision all, without exception, from the President to the beggar, are bound to abide.

The true rule of faith is the living and infallible authority of the Church of Christ. This, and no other, is the supreme tribunal, and the supreme judge in matters of faith. This is the source and safeguard of unity. I have already shown that Christ, our Lord, established in His Church an authority to whose teaching the faithful must submit. While it is nowhere said in the Scriptures that Christ gave to His Apostles, who then constituted the Church, a mission to *write*, we find it expressly stated in the last verses of St. Matthew's Gospel that He committed to His Church the mission of *teaching* all nations. We know also that He made submission to this teaching a condition of salvation (Mark xvi. 16), assuring us that he who hears the Church hears Him. Because He is always with His teaching Church, and the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete, abides with her forever (John xiv. 16). How could Christ make obedience to this teaching authority a condition for salvation, and declare that in hearing the Church, I should hear Him; that the gates of hell should never prevail against it; that the Spirit of truth is the Spirit of His Church, if that Church had no divine authority to teach, or were fallible in teaching?

Those who deny this authoritative and infallible teaching of the Church, if consistent, must give up all divine faith. "I should not believe the Gospel," says St. Augustine, "unless the authority of the Church moved me thereto" (C. Ep. Fund, c. 5). The Bible, without this living and infallible authority, leaves men necessarily in a state of doubt. For before they can believe any article of faith, on the sole authority of the Bible as the word of God, they must first be infallibly sure that the book, in which they find that article, *is* the word of God, and not the word of man; just as before we accept any statement as an article of the Constitution of the United States, we must first be certain that the Constitution spoken of is really the Constitution of the United States. How can Protestants settle that question? *i. e.*, how can they, without the authority of the Catholic Church, be infallibly certain that the Bible is the word of God? That the Bible, as they have it, containing so many books, and chapters, and verses, is a work of inspiration? This evidence is not found in the Bible itself, and even if it were there, the question would still remain, how do you know that this assertion is itself authentic? How do you know that this assertion is of God? They may believe that book to be the Word of God, because they think so, or because they fancy that the Spirit bears witness within them, or because this is the opinion of learned men, or even because their own denomination tells them so. But are they infallibly sure that they are correct? All those learned men are fallible; they acknowledge it themselves; their own denomination or Church professes to be not infallible, and consequently to be liable to err.

Moreover, this fallible authority is *human* authority. Will they believe on *human fallible authority* that the Bible is the word of God? They may, if they choose, but then let them be logical, and believe *whatever* is in the Bible on the *same* authority—in other words, let them give up *divine* faith. "Prove to me," says Rousseau, "the necessity of authority in religion, and to-morrow I will be a Catholic." That this authority is absolutely necessary is evident from the fact that without it the unity of the Church of Christ cannot subsist; without it the Church of Christ is a purely human institution; without it in religion we are lost in doubt. This divine and infallible authority I find in the Catholic Church, and nowhere outside of it; for the different denominations that have sprung up since the time of the "Reformation" positively reject it.

These, then, are some of the reasons "why I am a Catholic." I remain in the Church to which I belong, because, to use St. Augustine's words, "This is the Holy Church, the One Church, the True Church, the Catholic Church, which fights against all errors. She may be attacked, but cannot be overcome. All errors have gone far from her . . . . but she remains unsevered from her own root, in her own vine, in her own charity. The gates of hell shall not prevail against her" ("De Symbolo," n. 14).

CARDINAL WISEMAN.

His Eminence Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster, was born of Irish parents, in Seville, Spain, in 1802. In the year 1823 he was ordained priest and Doctor of Divinity, and in 1850 created Archbishop and Cardinal. His Eminence died in the year 1865.

DISCOURSES FROM THE PULPIT.

SERMON ON FAITH.

DELIVERED BY HIS EMINENCE DURING A TOUR OF IRELAND.

"This is the victory which overcometh the world—our Faith."—1 JOHN v. 4.

WHEN we contemplate the Apostles undertaking their ministry, we cannot fail to be struck with one singular feature of their characters, the calm and undoubting manner in which they assumed command over the whole world. The world of their day was the world of power, of wisdom, and of glory. Never had the Roman empire extended its arms so wide asunder nor held the extremities of its dominions with so firm a grasp. Never had learning, philosophy in particular, been more cultivated and favored in Rome itself. Never had such magnificent monuments been raised, such luxury displayed, such spectacles witnessed, as in the Gospel era, from Augustus to Nero. It was looking down immediately on a world like this that John, already enriched by the experience of sixty years since our Lord's ascension, confidently writes the words of my text. He describes, indeed, what had already been done.

Yes, the Apostles had already mastered the world. They began by dividing the Roman empire, and the nations beyond its pale, into ecclesiastical provinces; shared them out among themselves for conversion, without calculating difficulties, or forecasting consequences; and, what is most wonderful still, they soon reduced them into full subjection. Each president soon saw, seated by his side, a bishop who ruled the hearts and wills of thousands; and every proconsul found enthroned in his metropolis a primate or patriarch, who governed an ecclesiastical province more peacefully than he did a civil one. And this new distribution of the empire long survived, and survives yet, the imperial adjustment of administration. Thus did the weak confound the things of this world—confound the strong.

And so the Apostles grappled with the world of wisdom. They pronounced its philosophy folly, its learning ignorance, its principles false.

They set up a new knowledge, new maxims, an unknown truth. They spoke with certainty, not experimentally; not to meet the present want, or suggest an expedient. Every disposition which they made was a perpetual law; every admonition an eternal precept. Their declarations were not to be matured by experience, or modified by time. The entire system was cast at once, and came perfect from its mould; with a confident assurance that as it began so it would continue to the end of time. And thus did the foolish things of the world confound the wise.

With the glorious world of their day, the Apostles simply closed by contempt, they raised nothing against it but the cross; in aught else God forbid that they should glory. They trod barefoot upon its gold and jewels, its pageants and triumphs. One may imagine the scorn with which Peter or Paul looked on any gorgeous pomp that passed them, thinking in his heart: "One day a far more noble array shall bear my crucified Lord across this very spot, so proudly adorned by the persecuting emperor." And it has been so. Every year the successor of St. Peter carries the adorable Mystery of Love across the site of Nero's circus.* And thus did the contemptible things of this world confound the glorious.

But then this victory was not thus to end. So long as the *world* lasts, it has to be overcome by faith. There is a sublimity in the very simplicity of the prophecy; for what less than a prophecy is that which has to be fulfilled in every age? When victory is mentioned, conflict is presupposed; and when we speak of perpetual victory, we speak also of perpetual conflict between that which conquers and that which has to be repeatedly subdued.

Nor does St. John speak of faith as the result or the crown of such victories, but only as the means whereby they are to be obtained. Most distinct is the character of the two, of faith and of the world. The first is simple and definite; unvarying with time and country—our faith: the other vague and general; different in every region; changeable, so that no one could then foresee its possible phases—the world.

Our faith, what was it? It was not our learning, our skill, or our science. It was not what was to be the possession of the wise, or the inheritance of the opulent, or the spoil of the valiant, or the badge of the great and noble. No. It might be possessed by any one who had not the least eloquence to propagate it, nor the genius to defend it, nor courage to be its apostle. This faith was to be easy of access, to be light of burden, and to adapt itself to the smallest amount of ability. Then it was not to be the faith of one, or of another, it was to be "our faith";

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* The square of St. Peter's.

the faith of each and every one who belongs to the true Church, and is in communion of her sacraments. Such was the faith that had to conquer the world.

Let us suppose that at the time when St. John wrote these words, there existed in the Roman empire a chieftain who had obtained many triumphs; who had conquered provinces; had enriched his legionaries; had added the title of the Gallic or the Parthic to his name; and that toward the end of his long life, he should concentrate the skill gained by long experience to the devising of a means whereby the empire should be rendered forever invincible. Let us imagine him producing a weapon, be it sword or lance, so light that it could be wielded by any stripling conscript, and declare solemnly to those who trusted him, that by its single power all possible foes should be effectually subdued. Were some one standing by, who possessed the gift of prophecy, an Apostle, for instance, we might conceive him glancing into futurity, and thus addressing him:

"In a few years hence all the power of Rome will be required on her eastern and northeastern frontier, to beat off the flying squadrons of Parthians and Scythians. They rush like a flight of locusts round your legions, discharge their fatal arrows in a cloud into the midst of them, and sweep into the desert on their fleet steeds, defying all pursuit, and never come within reach of your new weapon. How will you cope with them?

"Then later will appear a race, clad, man and horse, in steel of finest temper, dashing like a whirlwind into the enemy's ranks; men wielding huge maces of studded iron, which crush the helmet deep into the brain, or ponderous swords which cleave the cuirassed knight to his saddle-bow. Have you calculated how your new arm will meet *their* assaults?

"In fine, the whole face of war will change: strength of arm or temper of metal will little avail. From iron mouths will issue clouds of smoke, amidst a roar as of thunder, hurling missiles that bear a certain though unseen death, and able by one blow to mow down entire ranks of enemies. Will your youths, armed with your light weapons, be able to rush against the jaws of these monsters and silence them or overthrow them?"

Now, something to human ear as rash and as unwise as would have been to a foreseeing mind such a promise of victory to an unvarying feeble weapon, might have sounded to a thoughtful one the assurance of the Apostle of unfailing success to a weak principle, against an infinitely varying antagonistic power. For the changes in civilization could easily be, and have been, as great as those in warfare. Yet faith has sufficed for all.

What more varied than the worlds of Britain and Gaul from those of Rome and Africa, from those of the half-civilized regions of Asia, or the fabulous East beyond the Indus? Yet, one by one faith has subdued them. But in succeeding ages was the victory without fail?

It was in the golden days of Roman greatness, at the very era of imperial power and wisdom, that the feeble old man of Ephesus spoke his word, and seemed by it fearlessly to say: " Mighty as is this empire, it is in your power to overcome it." "And how?" " By your faith." It was not long before the word was tested; indeed it had been so before uttered. Fierce persecution assailed the Church. The religion of Christ, at first despised, had grown up strongly. Its enemies thought it would be easy, should it become troublesome, to pluck it up by the roots. If this had ever been possible, it was now too late; the axe was required to fell the vigorous plant. Willing victims come forward on every side ready to attest, even by death, the sincerity of their faith. Among these it will not be difficult to select a champion, who, like David, shall defy and put to shame the entire host of the Philistines.

See there, a venerable man come to Rome from the East, on purpose to bear such witness. He wears the cloak of the philosopher; his pen and his speech seek opportunities to explain and defend those truths, on behalf of which he is ready to die. And so he will; but we cannot accept him as the representative of our thought. Pardon us, holy Justin, glorious martyr of Christ! Thou art filled with earthly wisdom as with divine; thou art learned in all wherein thy heathen antagonists pride themselves. Thou art not the foolish thing which we seek, that we may confound the wise.

Then behold, there stands ready before the tribunal an unlettered soldier, who, bred in camps and tutored in battle, rough and hardy, will scarcely be able to reply to the interrogatories of its judge. He has declared himself a Christian, he has proclaimed his faith. Yes, and he will brave all torments, and gladly give up his life in its defense. Still, forgive us, noble centurion and blessed martyr, if we accept thee not as our avowed delegate, to prove the axiom of John. Thou art robust and stalwart, used to suffer pain and brave public death. Thou hast of the strength of this world, and we want the feeble to confound its strong. And where shall we find this?

Go into the innermost recesses of some old Christian house—one in which the true religion has already passed into an inheritance, and the traditions of heathenism have died out. There you may perhaps find a virtuous maiden concealed like a modest flower from the gaze of men, the joy of her parents, their solitary hope. She has shrunk instinctively and by her choice from public resorts; she has not frequented the Forum, she has abhorred the licentious theatre, she has never mingled in the gay assemblies of pagan households. Gentleness, modesty, and sensitive delicacy are among her first qualities, carefully cultivated from her infancy. Let her be seized by some traitor, and suddenly dragged forth before the public eye; as that of one who has lived long in a dim light and is placed at once in the glare of midday is her dazzled vision. It is not a crowd, but a multitude by which she is surrounded—a clamorous, lewd, and brutal mob. Her modest charms whet their appetites for blood. On each side of her are coarse and savage executioners, red from the winepress of martyrdom, in which they have crushed the best fruit of Christ's vineyard, playful in the handling of their rude implements of torture. Before her is the judge with his assessors and attendants, cold and stern, determined not to be overcome by a child like her. She may hear at a short distance the howling of wild beasts and the yells of fifty thousand human beings equally thirsty for her blood. Her life hangs in the balance against the words that she shall speak; with life are honor, ease, enjoyment, rank. All are hushed to dumbness listening for the words of the bashful, blushing maiden, anxious and eager for her to yield. "Only say, 'I renounce the Christian faith,' and you are safe," insinuates blandly the softened president. She pauses but for a moment as she lifts her eyes to heaven, and stretches forth her arms in prayer; then with a calm look and firm voice exclaims: "I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ."

That is enough; a shout of fury cuts off all further explanation; the wild beasts are let loose upon her, or she is hideously tortured, till at length her mangled remains are dragged and flung away, to be recovered and enshrined by friendly hands. Who has conquered here? The very enemy owns it. The crowd itself is abashed; more thoughtful and feeling hearts are softened; the very judge mutters, "She has fairly beat me." And what was it in her that conquered? Neither strength nor wisdom, only her faith. She believed in Jesus Christ; she proclaimed this belief, and it brought on her trial; she held it steadfast, and she overcame by it.

A couple of centuries more and that empire of paganism is extinct, and the Christian one of the West is fast declining. Italy is become the prey of barbarous hordes, who in their ferocity spare nothing, and in their rapid succession leave no intervals for restoration, or even for breath. One of these tribes, the most terrible of the invaders, has crossed the Alps, spreading desolation around, and sending forward to Rome notice of its anticipated glut amidst the remains of ancient riches. So successful, so haughty is the career of this irresistible band, that its leader, Attila, takes the name, which all accord to him, of "the Scourge of God." But on the Chair of Peter sits a Pontiff of noblest Roman spirit, national and ecclesiastical, learned, saintly, eloquent, and fearless; one who knows it to be among the highest prerogatives of the shepherds of his fold to meet the wolf that would attack it, beat it back, or give their lives for their sheep. He goes forth, therefore, from his capital, attended by his unarmed clergy, travels to the boundaries of middle Italy, and confronts the barbarian chieftain at the head of his savage host.

He speaks to him with authority and gentleness combined; the proud Northern listens like a docile child to the paternal admonition, replies with deep respect, submits, and commands his impatient followers to banish from their thoughts all golden visions of the south, breaks up his camp, and turns back. What a victory over that new world of stern and warlike mould, which was about, not so much to absorb existing races as to stamp them all with its own image, and mingle intimately its iron with their crumbling clay! And by what means was it wrought? What conquered here? Faith. The perfect trust of Leo—so well called the Great—in the authority and perpetuity of his See, in the promises made to Peter, in its rock-like power to beat back the waves of earthly might, was the form taken by that faith, which, through him, overcame the Huns, and in them and Genserick, soon after, with his Vandals, the new world of rude prowess and unsapped vigor. This is the victory—your faith.

And now, coming down nearer to our own times, we may wonder if, when John wrote these words, he saw in a new Apocalypse the proud Reformer of the sixteenth century studying how he might pervert them to work their own refutation; striving to make them mean, that dry, personal belief, without a particle of other virtue, or even alliance with Faith's brightest sister, Charity, should suffice for salvation, and thereby overthrow the faith which in Agnes or Leo had overcome the ancient worlds, and make it lie a prostrate ruin at the feet of *his* sensual world? Did he contemplate the French philosopher of a later period collecting with wicked industry all the known or supposed results of science and history, to destroy faith, and thus break or rust the weapon whereby the world was to be vanquished? And after that class of sneering, sarcastic men, who disbelieved everything, even their own assertions and almost their own existence, had passed away, did the Seer of Patmos behold another in Germany and England taking up their cast-off tools, repolishing and resharpening them, to carry on, with greater ingenuity and coolness, and without the same scoffs or mocking air, the attempt to destroy faith in the learned and unlearned?

This, my brethren, is now going on around us, at least in the neighboring island. Yet the taint of infidelity has not reached Ireland; it is a land in which it can no more live than any other venomous reptile

There is a repulsive vigor on its very shore, a belt of rejective power girding its coast, which does not allow the insidious destroyer to crawl in. And of what is this formed? Is it that the great progress of learning enables your poor to oppose knowledge to knowledge, and so repel infidel teaching? Who, for a moment, believes it? Does any one imagine that because our children are taught to measure the distance from city to city over the map of the world, or because they learn the names and habits of four-footed beasts, of birds, and fishes, the likeness of which covers their school-walls, or because they are made quick at mental computation or at grammatical derivations, they are made proof against "oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called"? You know well that it is not the extension of such secular education which prevents the corruption and seduction of the Irish people. It is their *Faith*, simple and lively, that foils and puts to rout every attempt to lead them astray, which does battle with the world of subtle disputation, bold denial, and learned theories. The simple Creed in the peasant's mouth is a preservative against all errors. His humble confidence in the sound teaching of his clergy, his artless submission to the authority of his bishop, his firm attachment to the Chair of Peter, the consolations which he has derived from it in every dark or trying hour, its associations with all that is beautiful and virtuous to his mind,—such are the securities of his lively faith; and these suffice to render it unchangeable. This is the Faith by which the things that are *not* in the estimation of the world overcome the things that *are*, that no flesh may glory in God's sight.

Nor can any one pretend that this is a barren and uncultivated quality. Only look around you and ask what has given birth, growth, and beauty to this holy edifice. It is but one of the many fruits of Ireland's productive faith. No doubt much has been bountifully contributed by the rich toward its erection and its adornment; but it is to the faith of the poor that the unceasing and unwearying task of both is due; and they have right to glory in the work. Scarcely can I remember a parish church more complete in every respect than this. It has been conceived in a noble and generous spirit—one commensurate with that faith which is the faith of thousands; it is spacious, bold, yet regular in form, pleasing in proportions, and accurate in its design. Every detail is here, every part finished; all its windows glow with sacred light, filtered, as it were, of coarser rays, and purified as they pass through the warm tints of heavenly images. And now, to complete the holy work, roof, pillar, and wall give back that light varied by their own varied hues, and sparkling on their burnished gold. Brilliant, indeed, and glorious is the whole spectacle of this church, thus giving us proof how the faith, which no persecution has been able to shake, no seduction to weaken, no time to wear away, still.

in all that regards advancement of whatever kind, knows how to enjoy its full advantages. It has engaged here every resource of revived art, in building, in carving, in painting, in staining, and in metal-work, to pay homage to the faith that first raised, and then would beautify, the House of God.

Then if you wish to make and see this country happy, look first of all to the preservation of its people's faith. Everything else that is good will flourish and prosper if engrafted on this, while its venerable episcopate, so noble a portion of which I have the happiness of being associated with here, under its learned and saintly primate, and the zealous clergy of whom so many have come to grace our solemnity, will never slacken their hands in defending and cultivating this precious inheritance of Ireland. Let no one be led away by the idea that in endeavoring to promote material progress, religious considerations may be kept out of view. There never can or will be any real good where this separation of interests is contemplated ; for there is no real good but what is moral, and no solid moral good which is not religious. Keep a watchful eye on every system of education which tends to lessen, still more to exclude religious influence in its teaching. However tempting the scheme, however liberal the promises, however plausible the motives, listen not to the proposal. By whatever names the institutions may be called, keep jealously aloof from them : but in the education of the poor, more especially, prevent, by every possible means, any encroachment on the purely Catholic principles of training the child in the knowledge and practice of religion ; give him faith, strong and lively, solid and pure, and he may go forth into the world with the assurance that he will conquer.

SERMON ON TRUE BELIEF.

DELIVERED AT THE CONSECRATION OF ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, BALLINASLOE, IRELAND.

"Our mouth is open to you, O ye Corinthians! Our heart is enlarged."—2 COR. vi. 11.

SUCH, my brethren, are the words which naturally came to my lips on reflecting how, for the first time, they should open before you after many years' silence in this island. They refused to address you in words that could savor even remotely of controversy, for I felt that I had to speak to a congregation of faithful people, in whom the true, sound, and orthodox faith was so deeply implanted as to require no words of encouragement from me. I felt that it must be presumption to address you in words of instruction in the presence of an assembly of venerable bishops, each of whom is more worthy to teach than I, and who yet form a portion of those whom I am bound to address. No, my brethren, I felt it was only in words of congratulation—words of joy—words of exultation I could speak to you: that I might associate myself with those deep, earnest, and most holy feelings which must pervade you on a day like this; and that it was only because my heart would expand in the midst of you that I would even presume to speak to you. All I have seen around me—all that at this moment I see—serves but to expand and widen still more my heart, and to deepen within it those feelings which are common to us all, and which in their exuberance must needs overflow; and thus the heart being enlarged, the mouth must needs open to become, as it were, the floodgate through which these feelings may be poured out, so as to mingle with yours. And then, this, our common joy, like the waters which the prophet Ezechiel saw first collected in the temple and then issue through its gates overflowing, will go forth from these more sacred precincts, a swelling flood, to mingle with the exultation of the multitudes outside.

Therefore, my brethren, you will excuse me if in my address I say that which has been said to you a thousand times—if I repeat to you what your own feelings probably have already suggested. For when I see myself here, in the centre of this splendid edifice, it is not the beauty of its architecture, nor the solidity of its construction, nor the amplitude of its dimensions, which strike and move me. I can consider it but in one light—not merely as a magnificent temple—not merely as an evidence of the skill, or the taste, or the generosity with which it has been raised; but it is to me only another monument of your faith—of that undying faith which is the portion of your country. It is upon this alone I can speak to you to-day. Whatever I may say, suggested by circumstances, will be simply to tell you how I feel, and, therefore, how I must express my thoughts upon that which forms the great glory of this land—its prerogative—its privilege from God, that unalterable and unfailing faith which has endured for ages, which is prouder now than it has been at any previous period, and which will, I trust, go on forever, manifesting itself even with greater magnificence than it has done in our days.

If every country and every nation has received special blessings from God, it would be superfluous to tell you that the one which distinguishes this land to every one who visits you—that which marks you in history, and will give its peculiar characteristic to the narrative of events in this your Island of Saints—is the wonderful gift of a living and lively faith, to which tests have been applied, such as it has never pleased God to subject any other nation to. The course of Divine Providence has generally been that persecution should assail an infant church. We are told that the young plant requires the watering of the gardener that it may take a deep root in order to spring high; and we know well with what it is that God has watered in almost every country, the infant church. We know it is the general law that the seed of faith should be cast in sorrow, in order that its sheaves may be borne in joy. Often the apostle himself dropped into his own furrow and fertilized it, but the sprinkling of tears, mingled generally with blood, was the rule whereby God gave the first birth, and then increase to His church, wherever through the ministry of man He planted it. Here this order of Providence may be said, to a great extent, to have been reversed. It seems as if there had been something pure and even congenial in the very soil, which opened itself and received gladly the seed of life, and made it produce one hundred fold; so that the life of one great and holy Apostle sufficed to see the entire land Catholic. It was because here almighty wisdom wished to give evidence of the power of God and of His Providence with His church—to show how faith could endure the trials of centuries—not that sharp tribulation of the sword, which raises the courage of men, and makes even their natural feelings come in to aid the instincts and dictates of faith and of grace; but that slow and wearying action which tires out the patience of men, and seems almost to wear out also the action of grace and to complete the proof in one land that there was no trial to which the faith could be exposed which it was not powerful enough to conquer.

And this has been the trial which, if viewed by merely human eyes, gives us the strongest evidence that this faith is divine, that its energy is celestial, and that its gift is of God. If it had been but a human institution or principle, it must long since have yielded. All which it has resisted and overcome proves to demonstration that the finger of God has been instrumental in this long preservation, and His eye wonderfully watching over that which was His own.

My brethren, take the first and simplest test of the power of human opinion. In the moral as in the physical world, bodies act reciprocally in proportion to their masses; but we know well what must overcome. The earth curves according to its own will the direction of its satellite, and then, after making it revolve round its own great orbit, obedient in its turn with the rest of the planetary system, it yields to the attractive force of the huge mass which dominates over it. It is the same with those bodies on which moral action is exercised. The peculiarity of the social state in this country has divided the population into two distinct classes. I am not going for a moment to dwell upon the political or social character, or upon the causes or consequences of this state. I assume the fact as it is, and I ask you to put side by side these two bodies acting, necessarily, the one upon the other, in this as in every other country. Throw upon one side wealth, nobility, and worldly position, the influence of superior education of the highest class, literature, science, and whatever belongs to those who command, according to this world. Cast into the other scale poverty and misery, the absence almost for ages of the power of culture, the dependence totally for all that is necessary in this life, for daily food itself, upon those who belong to the other class. See these two bodies acting for centuries reciprocally upon one another. Suppose it to be a matter of mere human opinion, human principle, science, or of that knowledge of every sort that distinguishes them, and judge if it is possible that for hundreds of years that which is so much greater, more powerful, and more wise in the eyes of the world ought not to have crumbled and crushed under itself that which was absolutely subject to it, and lying under its feet, and reduced it into a homogeneous mass; and breaking down the barriers of opinion that separated the two, have made them in this become but one.

I ask you not merely to solve this problem in theory, but to solve it in practice, and to do that go to the neighboring island where God has cast my own lot, and see what has been the result of a similar condition of things. At the period when first religious differences began in that country, we know that the mass of the people were attached most deeply to the religion of their forefathers. They made pilgrimages of grace, as they were called—they rose, again and again, in insurrection, to prevent that change of religion which was attempted to be introduced amongst them, and they were crushed. Their efforts were stifled, and what was the result? A few years of superiority in one class which monopolized all earthly advantages, wore away the patient resistance of those who would not otherwise have altered their faith, until at length districts which once were most fervent and most zealously Catholic, hardly heard that name amongst them, and scarcely a trace was left in the feelings and traditions of the people, of the former existence of the Catholic Church amongst them. What has caused this difference? How is it that there it has been easy to sweep away, and that without any great destruction of outward and visible securities, the whole fabric of the faith, leaving nothing, not even the least vestige of a name to mark a traditionary remembrance of the old faith and holy thoughts of the people? I cannot see any difference except in this, that there was a heavenly power exercised here—that the whole of this trial was permitted by God for a great and special purpose. I cannot see but this difference, that it pleased God by one of those dispensations, which we must not endeavor to penetrate, to allow religion there to take, perhaps, a nobler and more magnificent hold upon the surface of the land, demonstrating itself by more splendid edifices, by more noble endowments of universities, and colleges, and hospitals; whilst here He made its roots strike deep into the very soil, and so take possession of the soil, that it was impossible to ever uproot it.

You know, and I need not tell you, how tremendous were those cruel acts whereby property was either confiscated or destroyed, and the inhabitants of whole districts were swept away, with a view, if possible, to remove the Catholic population, and with them take away the faith from the land. But, notwithstanding all this, the faith still survives. For, my dear brethren, they could not tear away the name of the saint from the cairn upon the rock or the mountain to which he had immortally attached it. They could not destroy that veneration for the holy places to which pilgrims went in their joy or in their sorrow, nor make them lose the remembrance of the saint who had imparted holiness to their valleys. They could not make your sacred walls and hallowed fountains cease to yield their precious streams, or lose the gifts which endeared them to the devotion of the nation. And more, they could not turn the hearts of the people from the rifled monuments of the piety of their fathers, their venerable roofless churches, under the shade of whose walls lie buried the bones of their Catholic ancestors, nor from those holy monasteries which, if they no longer shelter learning, at least preserve in their history all that was precious of those who have been faithful to that same religion. No, they could not take away from the land such monuments and such traditions. They could not even, in altering the language of the people, pluck from their tongues the sweet names which associated, not only with venerable monasteries, but with countless fields and valleys, signifying that some church or holy edifice had once stood, or some pious servant of God had once dwelt there. The land was sanctified throughout, and that faith spoke out not alone, as the prophet says, from "the stones in the walls," but from the very rocks and valleys of the land, and no power of man, no influence of class could remove it from the foundation which it had in the very soil, as well as in the hearts of the people of this country I know what those will say who smile at all such ideas, and think that I am speaking with prejudiced warmth and enthusiasm about what by them is regarded as an evil. They will say, "Yes, the Catholic religion has taken deep root in Ireland as a weed would do, which it is difficult, by any cultivation, to pluck up and eradicate." But I, my brethren, accept that simile, and bless God that it is so, and I will say why. There is not a plant, however precious and valuable to man, which is not somewhere the indigenous growth of the land. There is not a grain which you cultivate in your fields—not a tree that blossoms in your orchard—not a flower that blooms and yields sweet odor in your gardens, which somewhere does not belong to the soil, and can no more be eradicated thence, than the briar or the thistle from its native place. Such I believe to be faith in this country. It is the true growth of the soil itself; and beautiful indeed, as the most fair and lovely flower of the garden—graceful as the rose of Jericho, sweet as the lily of the valley, stately as the cedar on Libanus, fruitful as the grain which, in the steppes of Tartary, is to be gathered ripe, and uncut by the sickle, rich as the clustering grapes of the vines of Engaddi, where they grow amid the ordinary productions of the soil; and where, unlike those in the gardens of Judea, they need not to be planted or pruned. As indigenous as any of these—as fruitful and as beautiful, the Catholic faith is the growth of this land; and not only, therefore, do I accept the simile, but I thank God that it is so—for again I say, it cannot be rooted out. Oh! no, it shall not be rooted out. My dear brethren, that God who has watched for so many hundred years over His faith in this land, never will He allow His work of ages to be made void by the policy, by the learning, by the astuteness of man; but that which He Himself has planted shall grow, and strengthen, and become more powerful, and shall send forth its branches, as it is doing, to the uttermost parts of the earth. The emigrants will carry this holy faith beyond the waters to the farthest islands of the sea. The missionary will go rejoicing in his work, and bearing the glad tidings of God and of salvation to the savages of distant shores; and the faith planted here, after it has struck such deep root, and after it has withstood the storms which have so long raged over it in its native land, will fill islands and continents with the blessings which it has here bestowed upon those who surround me.

Or, my dear brethren, I will rather compare it to another of the gifts of God, suggested by this thought. There are lands, as we all know, in which the Almighty has so scattered gold, that it is everywhere to be found. It is to be picked up in large masses on the mountain-sides, or dug out where deep in the bowels of the earth, or it is to be gathered from the sands of the torrent or the desert; but everywhere it is to be found mingled with the soil. Now, such is the faith of Ireland. Throughout the length and the breadth of the land it is present to us in a fair and alluring form. It is mingled with the entire soil, and is to be found in the sands of your sacred streams and holy springs. It is to be discovered pervading every retreat in which the hermit has once lived, or in the desolate valley in which the saint has died. Everywhere this pure gold of faith is to be found. Oh! treasure it well, remembering that the smallest fragment of it is more valuable than all the riches that earth can give. It is a treasure which cannot be consumed on earth, and which reserves the fulness of its blessings for heaven.

But, my brethren, the field in this world in which God has treasured this precious seed of faith is the soul of man. There He has laid it deep, and there it has been closely watched and nourished in Ireland, until at length its fruits are becoming manifest as to-day in all that surrounds us. Religion presents two distinct aspects. The one is that which is purely interior—that faith, that hope, that love which are in the Christian—those holy thoughts, those sweet graces and converses with God, those sacramental influences which fill and nourish the soul—all these form the true substance of religion. But it has also its outward aspect; and when the two are united for a period of years, not only do those things, which are external and visible, become subsidiary to faith, supporting and encouraging it, and assisting its growth—but perhaps they are attended also with this great risk, that the two become so united together that it is impossible even to impair the one without injuring the other. It is as a tree around which a more tender plant has entwined itself, weaving its branches with those of the supporting stem, clothing and adorning it in return with its leaves, its blossoms, and its fruit, the fibres of the roots growing closely interlaced together. Attempt to cut down at last the one plant which gives nothing but strength and support, and the danger is, that you will not only injure but perhaps totally destroy that which it sustains. And so, although religion consists pure and undefiled in that which is within, in all the virtues to which it gives birth, and in all the beauty with which it adorns life, yet it has pleased the providence of God that His Church should become so associated with outward appearances, giving support and often glory, that it is difficult to assail the one without injuring the other. The very name of Church has acquired a double signification for the exterior building in which the solemn rites are performed, connected with the faith which is professed by those who worship therein; and the destruction of the outward church seems almost necessarily to imply some diminution or some weakening at least of the inward forces of that church which dies not. At least there are numbers, even of those who are faithful, of those who believe, whose faith is much sustained by the outward ministrations which God has provided. It is difficult to imagine a church persevering in its fervor when the visits of its priests are fraught with danger—when months and almost years may elapse before the faithful can receive the consolations of religion, or the food which God gives to His Church by the agency of its ministers. When that constant watchfulness of the pastors who have their flocks constantly under their eyes is withdrawn—when the shepherd is struck—the sheep become scattered: and it is certain that the loss of spiritual ministrations to the wants of the people—of spiritual assistance to the poor—of the means of maintaining places for their education, or for their comfort in illness—weakens to a great extent the power of religion. And if these are in the hands of others who use them for the opposite purpose of perverting and alluring away from the truth, then there is indeed danger that many in the Church may fall away.

But in another respect, your country stands alone in the dispensations of Providence, in dealing with the Church at least in Europe. Notwithstanding all that was done to destroy the Church of God in this land, He, in His mercy, maintained inviolable the succession of its pastors, and gave an unbroken chain from its great Apostle to this hour, and thus made a firm and strong bond, to which were attached all the other graces and blessings that religion can give. This was, indeed, His greatest crowning act of love—one that showeth He would not be angry forever, and which proved that He was striking with the rod of the father and not with the axe of the judge—that if He seemed to withhold the hand of mercy, He did not hold forth that of justice. But what became of religion—where were its noble churches and splendid monastic institutions? They were either swept from the land or reduced to ruin, or transformed into strongholds of animosity, and made the places from which have since come forth efforts to destroy, if possible, the faith. Why, my brethren, if there remained—I will not say a splendid cathedral, but a church like the one in which we are now assembled—preserved from the olden time for Catholic worship, I believe that, notwithstanding the stability of its structure, the very stones would be kissed away by the lips of pilgrims. The worship of God and the ministrations of its superior pastors in their vesture of holiness, as you have witnessed today, was a sight which, by your fathers in the last three centuries, would not have been dreamt of as possible, and the constant dedications of churches like this in every part of the country is a sign of the faith which they might have believed was possibly reserved for some centuries hence. To what a condition then were things reduced! It would appear that the best symbol of the Church, as it was for a long time in this country, is exactly one of those ancient churches I have described, from which every buttress has been plucked away, the roof stripped off, the altar overthrown, the niches plundered, and the walls defaced, and well-nigh ruined; but in the meantime all this had not been able to wipe away that sacredness of consecration which they had received, nor to draw away the affection of the people; for it yet remained a consecrated ground for them. Imagine now a congregation assembled in such a place, worshipping God according to the religion of the fathers, and then let us figure to ourselves that God should do habitually for it what He did for the B. Peter of Alcantara, when he took shelter in a dilapidated house, and God sustained with His hand the storm of snow that was threatening to overwhelm him, and kept it suspended over his head like a transparent and graceful roof, beyond the architect's skill, so that what of itself was the emblem of cold and poverty became at once a warm and genial shelter, and yet allowed the cheering light to come softened through it upon those below.

Now, similar to this was the Providence of God with your fathers. It was from the very pitiless bleakness of the storm which long afflicted their Church that He wrought the security against the evil powers that sent it, and He "*qui dat nivem sicut lanam*,"* wove from its very missiles the warm shelter of their piety; and it was through all this apparently oppressive and heartless storm that the mild rays of faith streamed through and brightened the hearts of all that were there assembled. And then, when it cleared away, the sun was shining brightly, it had risen in its beauty, and it is mounting toward its meridian now. No doubt, the wonderful Providence of God made use of the very spoliation and poverty of the Church here as the means of guarding it from the seductions of the world.

Oh! my brethren, it is this that forms the real wonder of the existence of the Church now so flourishing in this land. It is, that notwithstanding the destruction of what would appear the natural and visible support and sustainment of the faith, notwithstanding the sweeping away in a short time of that which was considered, from the usage and enjoy ment of ages, to have become a part of religion; still the faith maintained itself unshaken and unaltered. And why? Because, not merely had it taken root in the soil to the depths of the foundations of its holy places, but deeper far in the hearts, in the consciences, in the souls of the people, even to a depth that all the influence of the earth could not reach.

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* Who gives snow also gives wool.

Now, my dear brethren, I have dwelt long upon the past trials of our faith in this country. I have spoken of things which belong rather to generations now gathered to their fathers than to you; for you live in an age of promise, in an age of hope, and yet you, almost every one who listens to me, have witnessed perhaps the most severe and terrible of all the trials to which that Church has ever been exposed in this country. I have described two trials. One consisted in the destruction of worldly prosperity and the reduction of the great bulk of those who professed the Catholic faith to a state of abject misery; the other in that overwhelming persecution which threatened to destroy, and which, as far as its influence went, tried to annihilate the Church itself, by depriving her children of spiritual succor. The one reminds me of those messengers who rushed to Job to tell him that the Sabeans had come from one side and the Chaldeans from another, and destroyed his fields, swept away his herds, killed the herdsmen, and left him a poor and wretched man. The second brings before me that still more terrible trial which went sorely to his heart, when the children of his house were gathered together in the home of their elder brother. Oh, what was that home to all of us, the sons and daughters of the Church, but the home of our elder brother, Christ Jesus, in which, like the children of Job, your forefathers were gathered to partake of His own banquet, when in a moment the four winds of heaven came contending, rival powers—religions of opposite and conflicting creeds—that blew from every side against that house, and it was cast down and made a heap of ruins, underneath which a certain number perished. Neither of these trials shook for a moment the faith, or seemed, I may say, to disturb that deep-rooted religion which existed in the hearts of the people; but the Evil One knew that he could inflict another trial still. "Skin for skin," he said, "and all that a man hath he will give for his life. But stretch forth thy hand, and touch their bone and their flesh, strike them with famine—strike them with pestilence—and see if they will not bless God and die" (Job ii. 4). And the blight came and the pestilence came, and the children of the land were laid low, and fathers and mothers wept over whole families whom the hand of death struck down before their eyes, and they mingled their tears with those of their pastors, who were themselves despoiled by their own charity, and by the prevailing want of what was necessary to sustain their lives. Yet, blessed be God, under this awful, this unparalleled affliction, this great and truly patient people spoke not a foolish thing against their Maker, and sinned not with their lips. In unmurmuring, in patient suffering, they recognized in this affliction the hand of God. They saw in their deep misery but the chastising of children by their Father. They bowed their heads, and died as if they had been an army struck by the Angel of Death passing over them. They were buried in silence and in sorrow; and those who survived went again to the holy work, blessing and praising God, without a murmur or complaint. And was not this final trial enough almost to have shaken in the hearts of the people that continued confidence in God, and to have made them think that they were hardly treated by their heavenly Father? No; like Job, they bore all, meek and unrepining: but yet the hardest trial was to come. For then it was when the people were thus stricken almost with what looked to the world a leprosy—when nothing but sorrow and suffering seemed to be the inevitable lot of this country—then it was that the comforters came—then it was that men appointed from various religions in the three kingdoms met together, and came with food in their wallets to tempt, and with money in their purses to bribe, with light in their hands like the cunning fowler only to mislead, and they sat on the ground around their victim; for their comfort was reproach, and their consolation but rebuke. They pretended to have come in charity, to lighten the hand of God upon the people; but in truth their mission was to lay it as heavily as possible upon them, and make them believe, if it could be done, that their Almighty Father had abandoned them, or rather that they were—for these were almost the very words used—given up in their hunger and misery into their hands to relieve them, but only on condition of a sacrilegious apostasy.

Oh! sad alternative, to betray the faith which for ages no trial had shaken, or to see their children starve to death before themselves! This was the trial of trials—and by it was accomplished in the history of this people what was symbolized in the holy patriarch of old. Surely the patient and long-suffering of this country will be rewarded, and there will come, like the friends of Job, those who will give their "sheep or their earrings" (Job xlii. 11) to restore something of what belonged to the poor sufferers of days gone by.

Such is the faith as it appears to me in this country. Forgive me if, from the abundance of the heart, the mouth has spoken. I am unable to do more than this, to express those feelings which I may say are natural to me, but which have received such strength and enlargement since I came here amongst you. There now seems to be a bright dawn of a glorious future. It has been shrewdly remarked by a modern writer, that the darkest hour of the night is that which precedes the dawn; and your darkest hour has passed, and the dawn is coming. You have its harbinger in this church which speaks to you of what is going to be done, and what is being done, everywhere for the faith. Here this poor population have seen this edifice rise—not from the efforts of a few rich at a distance, but from the persevering exertions of themselves. They have the satisfaction of knowing that this church, after God, is their own: nay, indeed, it was their own, but since this morning God has taken it to Himself, and may He alone be Lord and Master here for ages to come. You have proof of this in these venerable prelates who have come to attend the solemnity—in many who have labored long for the love of God and the salvation of souls, and who are already veterans in His ministry, but gladly see around them disciples who, by the example they will receive, will carry the hierarchy forward to the end of the century; and around them is a race of zealous priests which cannot be extinguished, of men who are not to be left behind in what is called "the progress of the age," and who will show you (of which this very temple is proof) that there is nothing that can be done for the honor of God intellectually, artistically, and scientifically, which they are not ready to apply for the vindication of the faith and the advancement of religion. This, my dear brethren, is what, above all things, I now exhort you to; let the faith be kept within you, alive and fervent, come what may. If our calculations prove false—if God is pleased to allow you to be more severely tried than your fathers, fear not; stand the test of whatever earth can do in order to put to a further trial that faith which is in you. Your pastors will lead you; these holy bishops will be ever in the van, and they will conduct you certainly to victory, as they have done before. When this morning that procession of holy prelates entered here—when they passed within this arch of the sanctuary—what else was it but a triumphal arch which spoke to you of victory—of victory without anger and without pride—of victory won by meekness and perseverance of faith—a victory which only shows they have learned the lessons taught by the Apostle, which they, in like manner, will hand down to their disciples? "Thou," says the Apostle to Timothy, "hast fully known my doctrine, my faith, long-suffering, love, and patience" (2 Tim. iii. 10). Aye, these are the conquerors: faith, long-suffering, love, and patience. It was once, and only once, in history, that the gate of Jerusalem became an arch of triumph. Multitudes passed through it to mount the neighboring hill on which to sacrifice in honor of a victory. There were Roman centurions at the head of their troops; there were horsemen with their banners, and infantry with their eagles; there were magistrates and lictors, and civil officers; then there were priests and scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, and a vast multitude of men, Jews and Gentiles, and strangers from every country under the sun.

But who was the triumphant conqueror who closed that procession as he passed beneath that arch? It was the smitten and not the smiter—the reviled and not the reviler—who in meekness, patience, and humility, ascended the capitol of the world, the Calvary on which he offered the most precious of all victims to achieve as well as commemorate the great victory over death and hell. A likeness of this is the victory to which we must aspire—one which we must gain by our endurance in and for the faith—by our constant perseverance in it, in spite of what the powers of earth or hell may do against it. Let us prove that we are followers of that meek but mighty God, and as we imitate Him in His lowness, His mildness, and gentleness, we may be assured we shall resemble Him in His conquest and glory.

SERMON ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

DELIVERED IN THE DUBLIN CATHEDRAL.

"And He was subject to them."—ST. LUKE ii. 51.

BENEATH the roof of a church, dedicated to the glorious and ever Blessed Mother of God, where from every side shine down upon us the emblems of her dignity, on a day on which is commemorated that maternity,* which communicated to her all her sublime prerogatives; in the presence of a faithful people, who know how to love and to reverence her, it would be contrary to every sentiment that inspires me, if I spoke to you to-day upon any other subject than that which the time, the place, and the attendance so naturally suggest. It is not necessary for me to say anything to you who hear me in support of the Catholic doctrine concerning devotion to the Blessed Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ: it is not requisite that I should even explain to you, as if you were an ignorant flock, the nature of this devotion, its character, its conditions; nay, it is not expedient that I should try to recommend that devotion or endeavor to add anything to the fervor which I know animates the people of this island, and this city in particular—the fervor of that deep, most loving, most faithful affection toward her whom they consider their patroness, their mother, their best and truest friend, their intercessor, forever beside the throne of her Son. No, my brethren, it is not for any of these purposes that I will address you, but it is rather to give utterance to those sentiments of corresponding love and devotion which form a tie between us, as every bond of faith and piety ever must. I will speak to you upon the only topic which naturally comes to one's thoughts here; and I am sure that you would think I was wandering from what belongs to this day—that I was withholding from you the food proper to this festival of Mary, if I did not endeavor to place before you such thoughts as, with my inadequate powers, may show you how this festival of the maternity of the Blessed Virgin recalls to us the illustrious virtues with which she was endowed, and the sublime privileges with which she was invested. We will simply go through a few passages of her life, and consider her in her various relations with her Son; and see how we can trace those memorable events that distinguished her in the world, that have raised her to a place beside the throne of that Son in heaven, to her simple but glorious title of "Mother of Jesus."

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* The Feast of the Maternity, kept in Ireland on that day.

And first, my brethren, let us begin by contemplating her from the moment in which she verified the words of the angel, and gave to the world the Incarnate Word. It is certain that if we look around on earth for a type and representation of the best and purest possible affection; if we look for love in its utmost intensity, in its most unselfish simplicity, in its sweetest tenderness, there at once arises to our minds that natural affection which binds the mother to her child. For that pledge of God's love she is ready to sacrifice herself, forgetting every consideration; not only will she sacrifice health and all the pleasures of life, but life itself, if necessary; and we cannot imagine a being more ready to give her existence for another than the mother who sees her child in danger and resolves at once to make herself an oblation for its safety. So remarkable is this affection, that God has beautifully chosen it as the representation of His own love for man. He does not content Himself with saying to us, "I am your Father," notwithstanding all the natural ties of affection the title suggests, but He compares Himself to a mother in His true love for us. He could not give us any image more complete to show the tenderness of His love for us, than by comparing Himself, not to a father, but to a mother: "Can a mother forget the child of her womb? And even if she should forget it, yet will I not forget thee." *

Still, my brethren, perfect as is this love considered as the highest and holiest of earthly affections, there must be, and there is, a love superior to it—far greater, far higher—a love divine. The mother must love God more than the infant, for which she is ready to sacrifice herself. No virtuous, no pious, no devout mother but knows this, that rather must she lose her child than lose her God; and it is difficult to realize the magnitude of this love that transcends the love of the mother for her child. There are times when, perhaps, in her heart she reproaches herself with not loving God as she loves her babe. Even the holiest mother will confess that there is more emotion and sensitiveness, and more practical devotedness in the mother's love for her child than in any other; and that willingly would she love God in the same way that she loves the object of her maternal affections; willingly would she feel ready to do or to suffer as much for God as she does for the little object of her tenderness. In danger, therefore, is even this maternal love of being carried to excess, so intense is its nature. When the moment of real trial comes; when

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* Is. xlix. 15.

sickness strikes the child; when, like David, she prays and fasts for its life; when she offers herself in exchange that the child be spared; when the hour comes that she sees this little dear one begin to pant, and its breath gradually pass away, though she knows that the transition is only from a life of darkness and prospective misery to one of deathless life and infinite happiness, still she regrets to part with that child for her God, and for a short moment, perhaps, she repines and sorrows. If, after a few instants of bursting grief, she begins to reflect well, what are the humble words that come first to her lips? "Oh! I have loved that child too deeply; I made it too much the idol of my affections, and God has taken it to Himself." We see, then, my brethren, that this love of the mother, however beautiful, however natural, however commended, and again and again inculcated by the law of God, may become a dangerous affection, inasmuch as it may know no bounds, and possibly absorb all that divine love due to the Creator and Giver of all things. This danger is illustrative of the force and power of the mother's affection for the child.

To only one being on earth—to only one of God's creatures has it ever been, or will ever be, granted that this love could not be misplaced —could not become excessive. For, by virtue of the maternity of Mary, she was constituted the Mother of God; and there was no possible danger of her ever carrying the maternal affections, I will not say into excess, but even to the nearest approach of anything that was not pure and perfect, holy and most acceptable. The caresses she lavished upon her child she lavished upon God. Exercising the right of the mother, she embraced her child, and it was God she embraced. Every time she administered to Him the nourishment which His infancy was pleased to require, she was giving to the incarnate God a part of herself, bestowing upon God a gift which no other being was entitled or permitted to confer. This union of the maternal love with the divine love was indissoluble. The two branches of charity growing in her were so completely intertwined, that no power on earth or in heaven could separate the one from the other, or even for an instant disunite them, giving her, consequently, this singular prerogative, that, taking the highest, the most pure and perfect standard of human love, she was privileged to exercise it toward her God, so that it was impossible by any effort of her virginal heart to love too much, for she was loving God with all the power of a mother's affection for her child, and was, at the same time, rendering the love which others could only direct to the creature, to her Creator.

Surely, then, my brethren, we have here, referable to the maternity of our dear and blessed Lady, all that constitutes at once, in this earthly love of the mother for her child and divine love of the creature for her

God, saintliness in its highest possible perfection. What is the standard of holiness? The love of God, the observance of the first commandment --love God above all things; for those who thus love God fulfil the law. If, therefore, the love of God constitutes the very form and substance of holiness—if to Mary was given the privilege of loving with a fervor of love that could belong to no other creature—if she could love her God with all that intensity of affection the highest that earth can furnish, as the representation of the most complete and perfect love, that of the mother for her child, which was her relation to God—she had consequently communicated to her a character of love incommunicable even to blessed spirits; and it was this love of her God which raised Mary to the height of holiness, and made her become the most precious and the most beautiful of His saints.

Let us now dwell for a few moments upon the second stage of the relations between the Blessed Virgin and her Son, and see what character it bestows at once upon her, different from that which belongs to any other person. The gospel of this day—the words which I have chosen from it for my text—give us at once a clue to this. Our Lord has grown into that period of life when a youth has a will of his own which he may follow, and when he knows full well his prerogatives. But He lived in Nazareth, subject to His parents—" He was subject to them." You understand, of course, what that must mean. It follows that from that time He obeyed any order given Him, in that relation of parent and child. It does not mean that in greater or more important things He conformed to the will of His mother and of Joseph, His reputed father. The word "subject" signifies, as every one well knows, that submission which is due from the child to the parent, from the subject to his prince; which characterizes the servant in his conduct to him who rules over him. It means the habit of constant obedience, the observance of every behest, the readiness in every time and every place at once to do what is bidden; it means the disposition of mind, and of will, and of heart to sacrifice a personal will to the will of another, to substitute another's will for one's own. Such is what we understand by these words; and now let us see what is the depth of their meaning. Our Lord is living familiarly at home, as other children might live with their parents; He works at a menial trade; He is in that poor household the attendant upon His mother. He is not called Rabbi, or Master, or Lord, as afterward he was. He is still known by the name of His infancy—by the dear name which the angel communicated to Mary—by that sweet name of Jesus, which was always upon the lips of His mother and of Joseph. He is called, He is sent, He is commanded, or, command being unnecessary, He is desired to do whatever is needful for that little household. As His reputed father advances in years, and is approaching to his end, the obligations assumed by the Blessed Youth, His industry, His submission, His labors, only increase.

I have asked already what does this imply ? Our blessed Lord is God as well as man. As God, His holy will is none other than that of His eternal Father, with whom His union is so complete that it is impossible for Him, in any way, to have any will in contradiction to that of the Father. He cannot, however slightly or imperceptibly, depart from the will of His Father, for it is His own. No authority, no jurisdiction, no command could possibly induce Him to depart in the smallest degree from that eternal will in which He is Himself partaker, and which is His own divine will, and in which there can never be otherwise than full and perfect identity, not conformity, with the will of God. Now, my dear brethren, when our Lord obeys man, when He puts His will at the disposal of a creature, it cannot be, except on the condition of complete certainty that there will be in every command and in every desire that may be expressed to Him, a perfect uniformity with the will of God. It must be the same to Him to obey the will of Mary as to obey His Divine Father ; for, if the two are at variance, He must disobey the creature. Not only must this fact of conformity between the commands of the one and the will of the other be such, but it must have been to the knowledge of God a certainty that it would be always such. The fact of declaring that Jesus was subject for eighteen years to that blessed Mother at once implies that He knew, during the eighteen years, as during the years that preceded, that there would be no discrepancy between the will of her and the will of His Father, with whom every act, every thought, every breath of His must be in necessary unison. Now, my brethren, we may desire to love God to the extent of our power. Man may seek to the utmost to do what pleases the Almighty, and yet we know it is impossible for him, in this world of imperfections and temptations, always to be sure that his will and his acts are in accordance with the will of God. On the contrary, it is only after he has discovered the will of God that he can truly say he has endeavored to follow it. It is a perpetual study, a constant care and anxiety with him that whatever he does be conformable to God's will. We must endeavor, as it were, to move in the same line or the same orbit, following exactly, step by step, Him from whom alone we can learn and derive that power of conformity to His will in all things. The privilege and the blessing of knowing that they thus conform to Him is reserved for those blessed spirits, the souls of the just made perfect, who live in God and in the eternal enjoyment of His presence, who cannot for a moment change in their devotion to Him, or in their state of perfect uniformity with His will. This will be the happy lot of man redeemed and saved, when the time of trial is gone by, and when he can no longer follow his own earthly desires. But to Mary, upon earth, was granted this high prerogative of being in perfect conformity in her own actions to the will of God. So complete was this identity of sentiment, that the Son of God Himself was able to obey her with the full certainty that every command of hers, that every request of hers would be in perfect and entire concord with the will of His heavenly Father. And so every look of Mary was but the reflection of the eye of God; every word that passed from her mouth was the echo of the voice of God coming from His throne; every command or wish she expressed, every impulse and every suggestion harmonized with His. Beloved brethren, what are the conditions necessary for love? The desire of being in perfect unity and harmony with the object of affection; and Mary can truly be said to have been in entire union of heart and soul with God, and not alone in love, but in action and in word.

Is there yet a higher step which it is possible for a human creature to aspire to, for bringing himself or herself nearer still to God? There remains but one, and it is that higher love and uniformity with God's will which naturally inspires the creature with a desire, if possible, to co-operate with the Creator; to be not merely a material instrument, but truly a sharer in His own work; to be chosen to act in His name, and to exercise power which, emanating from Him, is still so intrusted that it may be used with the freedom that gives merit to its application. Do you not think that the angels in heaven who see the face of the Father, passing a blissful eternity in the contemplation of Him, esteem it a distinction to be still further deputed to perform the will of God? Do you not believe that the guardian angel who is sent in charge of the least castaway amongst the children of men—the poor foundling that is left to perish—considers himself invested with a mission full of dignity, full of glory, because he is thereby doing the will of God, carrying out His purpose, the salvation of mankind; or that when an illustrious angel like Gabriel, Raphael, or Michael, receives a commission to bear some glad tidings to the world, or perform some great work of divine dispensation, he unfurls his wings with delight, leaves the immediate presence of God, which we imagine him locally to contemplate, but which never departs from Him, and proceeds gladly, whether it be to Daniel to expound prophecy, or to Mary to bring the message of eternal love, considering it the highest honor to be thus enabled to assist in carrying out the glorious, the magnificent designs of God? And what was the position of those great men of the old law, commencing with Moses and proceeding down to the Machabees, who were ordained to become the chiefs of God's people; to whose guidance and care was committed the carrying out of His great mercies; who bore in their hands the rod of His omnipotence; who carried in their breasts the secret of His wisdom? Were they not honored beyond all other men? Did they not consider it a glory to be thus intrusted with any great mission of providential action? There was too, my brethren, in all this some reward of honorable distinction for those so engaged. The angels thus employed are distinguished amongst the heavenly hosts, and have specific names, recorded that we may single them out for devotion; and those who were so honored amongst the men of the old law were thereby raised above the rank of ordinary prophets, and became the heroes, the great men of the earlier dispensation.

But to take part in the work of God silently, unknown, without reward from mankind, at least during life, without those incentives which make men equal to a great and high mission in the world, that was a merit reserved for her, without whose co-operation it is hard to say in what state mankind would have been. God was pleased that it should depend on her that the greatest of mysteries should be accomplished. He gives her time to deliberate; He accords her permission to suggest difficulties to make her own terms, that she shall not have to surrender the precious gift which she values higher than the highest imaginable of honors, so that it requires the assurance that to God's omnipotence even the union of the two prerogatives is possible, and that attribute is to be exerted for her. And so it was not until she had said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to the Word," that the great mystery was accomplished.

And now pause for a moment. Here is the greatest of God's works, not since the creation of the world, but during the countless ages of His own existence, the Word incarnate, the Word made flesh. Yet how singular is the part of Mary in this mystery. She utters the words; they scarcely fall from her lips, and she alone remains intrusted, not only with the precious gift itself, but with the knowledge of it. No one else can have known it. Joseph himself was not aware of it, till an angel revealed it to him. Allow me now for an instant to deviate from the line which I was pursuing. I have addressed you as good and faithful Catholics, believing what the Church teaches you, and also as servants of Mary, feeling true devotion toward her; but I beg here to make a remark which may, perhaps, be useful in conversing with others. Look at those men who, unhappily for themselves, know not, and understand not, the prerogatives of Mary; look, I will not say, at those more wretched men who have the hardihood, the unfeelingness, the brutality, to decry her, but to those who, in more respectful terms, profess simply to overlook her. Just see the position in which such persons are placed, as to their belief. They say, "We cannot worship," as they call it, the Virgin Mary; we cannot honor her, because in doing so we should be derogating from the honor due to her Son, to the Word incarnate, to Jesus Christ. I would say to these men: How do you know that He was incarnate? How do you know that the Son of God became man? You say in your creed that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost. Who gave you evidence of that conception? Gabriel did not manifest it. He vanished as soon as he had delivered his message. You do not believe, no Protestant believes, that the Bible is a simple *revelation;* that is, a series of truths not known, and which could not be known by human means. The Evangelists themselves —the one from whom I have quoted—tells us that "Mary laid up all these words in her heart," and that he sought information from those who knew everything from the beginning. Mary was the only, the sole witness in the world to the mystery of the incarnation. There was only her word that she conceived thus miraculously of the Holy Ghost. She told it to the Apostles, and they believed it, and recorded it with the sanction of the Holy Spirit. The real source of the historical and inspired testimony of the accomplishment of the great mystery of the incarnation is Mary; and those who reject her could not have come to believe, except through her testimony, that God took upon Him our nature. It is through her that they know it; yet they pretend that honor to her is at His expense. But as it was with her co-operation that this great mystery was wrought, so was it right that through her it should be communicated.

The time at length came for the awful completion of that eternal mystery of man's redemption which was to astonish men and angels. There was one heart in which all that was to come was faithfully treasured—hers who had listened to the wonderful and mysterious words of the venerable old man that told her, in the days of her motherly happiness, that the sword of affliction would pierce her heart. Oh, she had often, no doubt, conversed on the painful topic with her Divine Son. She knew too well what was the course He had to run. She knew wherefore He had come into the world, and how every breath of His was an act of obedience to the will of God. She knew well that He had bitter food, indeed, to take, which was not prepared for Him by her hands. She had lived, by anticipation, in the suffering which naturally resulted from this knowledge communicated to her, and she well knew the time was come when, at the last passover with His disciples, He was about to cast aside this world, and enter into the kingdom of His Father. Then did she know that another cup besides that of His paschal feast was to be placed in His hands, to be drained by Him to the dregs. She knew that well—so well that it is hardly necessary even to have recourse to the pious tradition that she saw in a vision what passed in the garden of

Gethsemani. But certain it is that the morning dawn saw her hasten to her Son, in order to carry out that conformity which she had preserved with the will of God during the whole of her life; that conformity which had been so great, that her Son, in obedience to her will, anticipated the time for the performance of His first miracle. It was right that this conformity should at length be transmuted into a perfect unity, incapable of the slightest separation; and that could only be done as it was accomplished on Calvary at the foot of the cross.

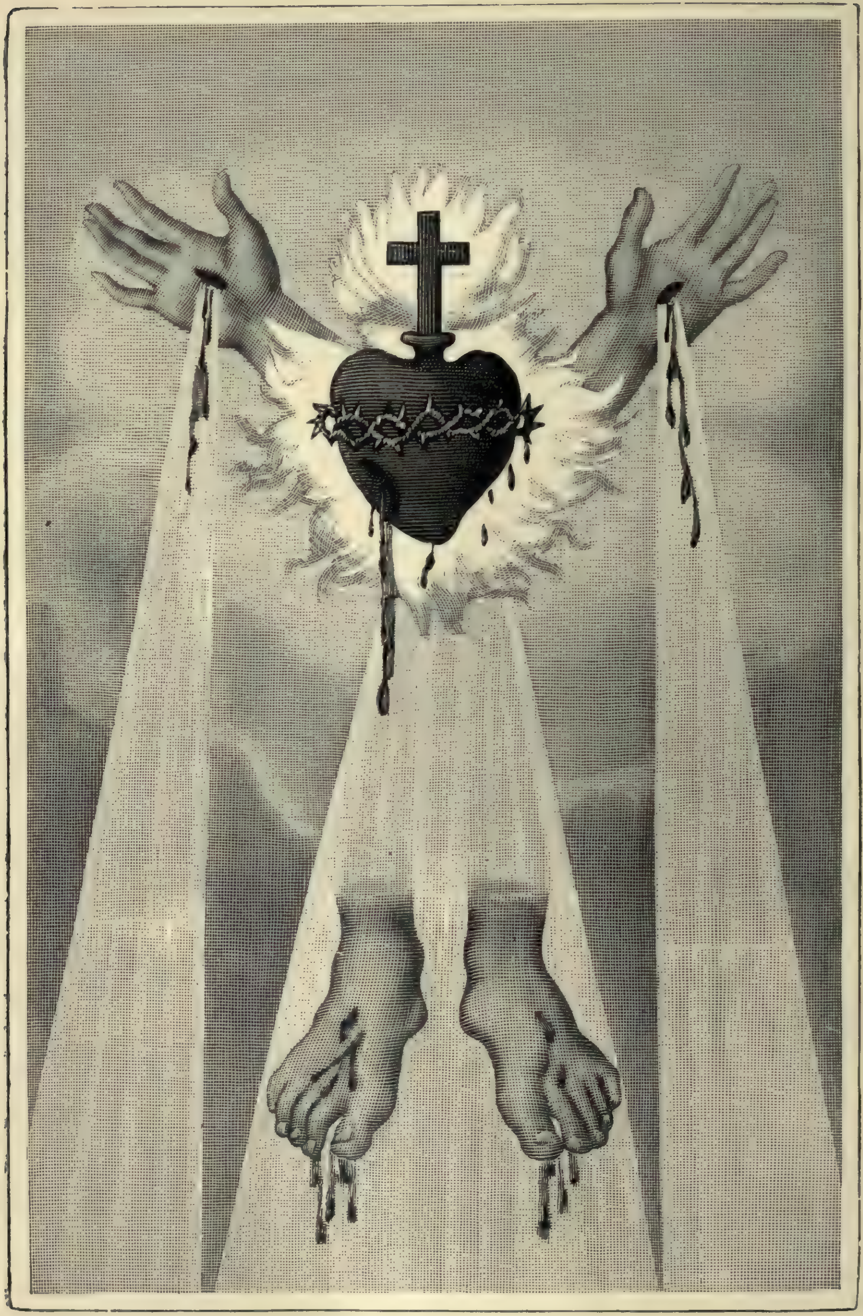
My dear brethren, why was Mary there? That simple question in its answer solves a great problem. Why was Mary there? It was no part of the sentence on Jesus, as if to increase or to enhance the bitterness of His death, that His mother should stand by, and it never was commanded in any nation, however barbarous, that the mother should be at the scaffold when her Son expiated what was, rightly or wrongly, imputed to Him as His guilt. It was not compulsory on Mary to be at Calvary; she was not driven there, nor was it usual in her to seek publicity. She had followed Him, indeed, through all His mission in Judea; but she used to stand without, and the people who surrounded Him would say, "Your mother and brethren are outside." She did not claim the privileges of her rank to be close to Him when He was disputing with the Pharisees or instructing multitudes. When He went into a house to perform His miracles, or to a mountain to be transfigured, He took Peter, James, and John. We read not that Mary presumed to follow Him, and exult in the magnificent exercise of His divine power or the manifestation of His heavenly glory. No, she followed at a distance; she kept near Jesus, watching over Him. But she knew that it was not her hour; that it was not yet the time when her parental duty was to be associated with her parental rights. She had lived the whole of her life in retirement, first in the Temple, then in the cottage at Nazareth. And she who naturally shrunk from the assemblies of men came forth at the time most trying to her feelings, to be present at the execution, the brutal execution of her Son, in that form of suffering which was most revolting and most cruelly rending of her tender heart. Mary came forth to witness the death—of whom? Of her only beloved Son, of her only child, whom she remembered once an infant in her arms. She will draw nigh to see these hands cruelly pierced, which she had so often pressed to her lips; she will stand by and see that noble, that divine countenance—the first look from whose eyes beamed upon her, the first smile of whose lips shone upon her heart—bedewed with blood, streaming from the thorny crown; to see Him still bearing the marks of having been beaten, and buffeted, and defiled by spittle and mocked by His persecutors. She came to seek Him at the hour of this suffering. And why? Because the heart of the mother must be near that of the son, in order that they may be both struck together, and so endure most perfect union of suffering, that she may be said truly to co-operate, in sympathy, with the divine work of salvation.

Suppose, my brethren, you have two masses of unalloyed gold. Let the one be heavier than the other, of incomparably greater value, more beautiful in its color, more pure in its substance, and in every way more precious from a thousand associations. Let the other be also indeed of great price, though very inferior to it. What will you do that they may become only one? Cast them into the same crucible, heat them in the same furnace, and they will melt into one, so that you may not separate them again. What a furnace of affliction, what a crucible of torture and of anguish was that in which the two hearts of Jesus and Mary were fused in that hour on Calvary; and could it have been possible that there should arise a difference of thought, of feeling, of desire between the two? Could it have been possible to unravel them, having lost every other thought, every other idea, in the predominant one of accomplishing the great sacrifice which God had appointed for the salvation of man?

As musical chords, when in perfect harmony, will so sympathize, that if the one is struck its vibrations will be communicated to the other, and agitate it in perfect accord, so did the fibres of those two most blessed hearts, agreeing so justly in tone, utter the same sweet strain of patient love; and every pang and throb of one was faithfully repeated in the other.

Then this conformity went further still. In that most solemn hour Jesus formally recognized Mary as His mother, as He proclaimed God to be His Father. What could she aspire to but imitation, however imperfect, of what the Heavenly Father was accomplishing in His well-beloved Son? Then, as she knew that the Eternal Father was surrendering Him to sacrifice and to death out of love for man, could she do less than surrender Him too? And she is come hither for this very purpose. Therefore does she stand at the foot of the Cross, that for lost man she may make a public and willing sacrifice of all that is dear to her on earth. Only she, His mother, can thus put herself into strict uniformity with His Almighty Father. As she accepted Him at His incarnation, she yielded Him at His death, saying: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed and fully accomplished ever be the will of God": yes, although it may wring her maternal bosom, and drive the sword of affliction deep into her loving heart, even to its inmost core. Thus it is she became a co-operator, as far as possible, with God in His great work; she became the priestess on the part of mankind, to whom was allowed to accomplish the holocaust which was considered too difficult and painful for Father Abraham, the sacrifice of a beloved child. While we know that Jesus Christ is alone the priest and the victim to His Father, we do not derogate from the infinite majesty, efficacy, and sublimity of the oblation of the Lamb upon our altars, by believing that He permits us, His unworthy priests, to be, in a certain degree, His coadjutors in the work, not in any way increasing its efficacy by aught that we can do, but still standing as it were at His side, His ministers, soliciting and producing the divine action, without which nothing that we can do would take effect. In some such manner it may be said that Mary, loving God as no other creature ever loved Him, loving in uniformity with His divine will, in a way never granted to any other being on earth, at length reached that which must be the very consummation of the desire of love, that of acting, working, and suffering with God; taking part, so far as human infirmity can do, in the accomplishment of His sublime and glorious work of redemption.

My brethren, I am sure that many of your hearts have been suggesting that this maternity of Mary extends beyond one dear Son; and you ask, Are not we her children? Do not we commemorate this day her kind, affectionate, and efficacious relationship with us of a mother to her children? I need not tell you that, when the two sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary were so melted together in affliction as that they could not be separated, that was the hour in which the fully-recognized brotherhood between Jesus and us was established. The relationship which commenced with the incarnation, caused us to become His brothers truly, and Mary consequently to become our mother; but His parched and quivering lips, just before He uttered His last cry upon the cross, proclaimed this relationship, and bade her receive from John his love as a child, and John to receive hers as of a mother. We accept these words in their fullest sense. We take our place willingly with the beloved disciple without fear of being rejected, and gladly send up our prayers to Mary for intercession, as our mother sitting on her throne in heaven. We cannot place her in the ranks of other saints who are partaking of bliss with Him. There are amongst them, no doubt, those to whom we owe special devotion, those who are the patrons of our country, those who planted and defended its faith, who were celebrated for having honored it, and, still more, blessed it. There are also there our guardian angels with the mighty host of blessed spirits that we know to be ministering before the throne of God. Yet, not with the honor that we pay, or the prayers which we address to any of this glorious array of saints and angels, can we classify the deeper devotion, the more fervent supplications, still less the filial duty which we owe the mother of God. We speak to them as saints, as faithful servants of the Lord, as our friends who have preceded us to glory and can assist us there; but to none can we use the words which we can apply to Mary; to none can we speak as a child to its mother; with none other can we establish our claim to the patronage, care, and love, which, as children of a common mother, every day and every night we are at liberty to demand from Mary. Even as Solomon, when his mother was announced, rose and bowed to her, and placed her on his right hand on a throne before all others, so is Mary placed between the Heavenly Host and her Son; so that when we think of her, we may lift our minds and thoughts to her as one enjoying heaven like a solitary, brilliant luminary, shining between Him and the highest rank of those blessed hosts. And why? Because she is the mother of God. Her maternity has bestowed upon her that which, after all, is the completion of her love. Her love is perfect, her conformity is rendered eternal, and her co-operation with Jesus continual in that constant flow of her kindness to us, in that perpetual representing of our wants to her Divine Son, in her faithful intercession for us all, consistently with her singular prerogative as the mother of God. Then, beloved brethren, cease not in your affection to her. Mind not more than you do the winds that fly past you, words which you may hear in disparagement of this most beautiful devotion, as if the worship of our divine Lord suffered from devotion to her. Pray frequently in your necessities to her, in your wants, in your trials, personal or domestic, and feel sure that she will attend to your petitions. Be assured that the link which bound Him to her on earth, and continues to unite Him to her in heaven, also binds us to her, so that in Jesus and Mary we have our confidence, our hope, and, in the end, eternal bliss.



The Five Wounds.

THE CEREMONIES OF HOLY WEEK CONSIDERED IN CONNECTION WITH HISTORY.

Monumental character of church ceremonies—Records of the earliest ages—Midnight service—Symbolical power given to rites suggested by necessity—Recollections of the triumph of Christianity—Adoration of the Cross—Procession on Palm Sunday—Adoption of the Trisagion under Theodosius—Recollections of the Middle Ages—Rites once general here preserved from total extinction—Connection with the Greek Church.

HAVING considered the Offices of Holy Week in their relations with Art, as well external, or in their outward circumstances, as internal, through their essential forms; the plan which I have laid down brings me to treat of them in their historical character, or as connected with various epochs of ages past. Into this portion might most properly be said to enter the learning of my task; as it would seem to require a minute investigation of the cause and origin of each ceremony observed in these sacred functions. But I much doubt whether such particular discussions would lead to much practical benefit; and not rather, by the variety of subjects and arguments, produce some confusion and dissatisfaction. I prefer, therefore, a method more according with that which I have hitherto kept—of presenting more general views, and classifying objects under heads which may be remembered, and,—when remembered, produce a wholesome impression.

On hearing that I am about to treat of the historical value of these offices and ceremonies, perhaps many will be inclined to prejudge that I am anxious to prove them all most ancient, and trace them back to the earliest times of Christianity. Whoever shall so imagine will be completely mistaken. If the Catholic Church, in all things essential of faith and worship, lays claim to apostolic antiquity, she no less holds a right to continuity of descent; and this, as well as the other, must be by monuments attested. When we cast our eyes over England, and see, in every part, remains of ancient grandeur belonging to a very early age,—raised lines of prætorian encampments and military roads, or sepulchral mounds with their lachrymals and brazen vessels; then in our search find nothing more, till, many centuries after, noble edifices for worship, first somewhat ruder, then ever growing in beauty, begin to cover the land; we conclude, indeed, that it has long been peopled, but that the break of monumental continuities proves the later race to have had nought in common with the earlier; but that a dreary waste of some sort must have widely spread and lasted long between them. Not so, on the other hand, is it with this city, in which an unfailing series of public monuments, from the earliest times, shows that one people alone have ruled and been great within it, and guided its policy upon a constant plan. It is even thus with the Church which, in many and varied ways, has recorded its belief, its aspirations, and its feelings, upon monuments of every age,—in none more clearly than in her sacred offices. It would be unnatural to refer many of the rites now observed to the very earliest ages. What have joyful processions in common with the low and crooked labyrinths of the catacombs? How would the palm-branch grate upon the feelings of men crushed under persecution, and praying in sackcloth and ashes for peace? These are the natural symbols of joy and triumph; they express the outburst of the heart when restored to light and liberty; they are forms of Christian lustration over scenes and places that have been defiled with previous abominations.

One striking difference between the old and new law seems to consist in this, that the latter was not content to form the spirit of the religious, but moulded its external appearance to an unalterable type. The Jewish nation might undergo any political modification, but the forms of its worship, its place and circumstances, its ceremonies and expressions, were ever to be the same. And yet, with this stiff, unvarying character, its worship was essentially monumental. The paschal solemnity was a ceremonial rite, acting dramatically, and so commemorating the liberation of Egypt; the Feast of Pentecost reminded every succeeding generation of the delivery of the law: that of Tabernacles celebrated the long sojourn in the desert. Later, new festivals were added, to record the dedication of the Temple, under Solomon, and its purification, under the Machabees, and the salvation of the people from the cruel designs of Aman. Many of the Psalms, or canticles sung in the Temple, were likewise historical, or composed by David on particular passages of his life.

But in all this we see no power of development; no expressive force which allowed the feelings and powers of each age to imprint themselves on the worship, and characterize it in later times by the monumental remains of discipline and customs variable in every age. In the sense which I have spoken of the Jewish religion, the Christian worship is eminently monumental, as the very festivals of which we are treating do abundantly declare. And in addition to this, it has continued, from age to age, both to institute new festivities as memorials of its varied relations with outward things, and to mark its feelings at peculiar seasons, in every part of its offices and prayers. The discovery of the cross, under

Constantine, the dedication of the Lateran and Vatican basilicas, and the recovery of the symbol of our salvation, under Heraclius, are thus commemorated. In later times, the foundation of institutes for redeeming captives, celebrated in a peculiar feast, records the miserable subjection of a great part of Christendom to barbarian tyranny; and festivals yet celebrate amongst us the victories by which that power was broken, and the West freed forever from its fear. When, in 1634, Pope Urban VIII. discovered the relics of St. Martina and rebuilt her church, he himself wrote the hymns for her office; and there deposited the last feelings of anxiety and the last prayers of the Church for her liberation from the terrors of Mohammedan power. In like manner will posterity commemorate each succeeding year, in the hymn and lessons appointed for the 24th of May, the unexpected return of the venerable Pius VII. to the throne of his predecessors, after his long captivity. In the service of the Church of England three or four historical events have been, I believe, recorded; the murder of Charles I., the restoration of his family, the arrival of King William, and the Gunpowder Plot. Each of these commemorations is more connected with political events than conducive to religious feelings; the last, perhaps, may be considered as rather tending to keep alive a spirit very different from charity and brotherly kindness. When the contests for the crown of Naples used to bring into Italy periodical incursions of French armies, whose track was ever marked by rapine and desolation, they were viewed in the light of a public scourge, and their removal was deemed a fitting subject for prayer. Hence in the Missals of Lombardy, at that period, we find a mass entitled, "Missa contra Gallos." But no sooner was the evil at an end than the prayer was, in good taste and charitable feeling, abolished. The day, perhaps, will come when similar motives may produce, in our country, similar effects.

But what forms a distinctive property of Christ's religion, is, that He left few or no regulations concerning external worship. He instituted sacraments that consist of outward rites; but left the abundance or parsimony of external ceremony, to depend upon those circumstances or vicissitudes through which His Church should pass, and the feelings which they might inspire. It is this idea which my discourse of to-day is intended to develop, by representing to you the ceremonies of Holy Week, as monumental records of various times and ages, each of which has left its image stamped upon them as they passed over. And thus, methinks, they will possess an additional interest, as monumental proofs of the continuous feeling which has preserved, as it embellished, them, from the very beginning.

The most important functions of Holy Week are referred to the common and daily liturgy of the Church, and are joined to it as to a base which they adorn for the time, with records of events by them commemorated. Palm Sunday has its blessings and procession only in preparation for the Liturgy or Mass; and its solemn Passion is only the gospel adapted to the occasion. Thursday and Saturday present nothing peculiar, except additional ceremonies before or after the same celebration; and Friday's service is a modification thereof, peculiarly formed to express the mourning and the graces of that day. The substance, therefore, so to speak, or foundation, upon which every age has placed its contribution, must form the oldest and most venerable portion of the service, and should, in fact, be as old as Christianity itself. And so in truth it is. For the mass, whereunto all the other ceremonial is mainly referred, is nothing else than the performance of the eucharistic rite instituted by our blessed Saviour. It may be considered as consisting of two distinct portions—one essential and the other accidental. The first consists of such parts as are, and must be, common to all Liturgies, and comprises the Offertory or oblation, the Consecration by the words of Christ, and the Communion. These are all to be found substantially the same amongst all those Christians who believe the Eucharist to be a sacrifice, and to contain the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; for they occur in the Liturgies of Latins and Greeks, Armenians and Copts, Maronites and Syrians; and moreover, in those of Jacobites and Nestorians, who have been separated from us since the fifth century. But to this remotest period belong also many ceremonies which, though not essential for the integrity of the Liturgy, are clearly traceable to the apostolic time. Such, for instance, is the prayer for the departed faithful, which is wanting in no Liturgy of the East or West; the commemoration of the Apostles and Saints; the mingling of water with the wine, the use of lights and incense, which have been severally acknowledged to be derived from the time of the apostles, by Bishops Beveridge and Kaye, by Palmer, and other Protestant writers. Most of the prayers which constitute the present Liturgy are to be found in the rituals of St. Gregory the Great, St. Celestine, Gelasius, and other early popes; and may be supposed, consequently, to be still more ancient. I hurry over this period, both because I have lately had occasion to treat concerning it in another place, and because it is only remotely connected with the subject of these Discourses. It was, however, necessary to say thus much, to show the groundwork whereon the solemn functions of this season rest.

For three centuries the Christians lived in persecution and concealment. This naturally led to the selection of night, as the fittest time for the celebration of their sacred rites; and caused the greater portion of the Church office to be allotted to that silent hour. We might likewise expect to find whatever ceremonies retain the remembrance of this state, partaking of the symbolical and mystical spirit which such awful assemblies must have inspired. Of this early period, monuments are not wanting in the offices of Holy Week. The very office of Tenebræ is, in truth, no more than the midnight prayer of that early age. It continued to be performed at midnight for many centuries, especially at this time, as appears from a very ancient manuscript of the *Roman Ordo* published by Mabillon, in which it is prescribed to rise for them at midnight. Many centuries ago, the anticipation of time, now observed, took place; but the name and other terms were kept to record its earlier method of observance. The service itself was called *Tenebræ* (darkness), and *Matins*, or morning office; and each of its three divisions is styled a *Nocturn*, or nightly prayer. Another monument of that early period may be found in the mass of Holy Saturday. Throughout it, the service speaks of the "night"; it is the night in which Israel escaped from Egypt, and which preceded the resurrection of Christ. For the entire service, as I observed in my first Discourse, refers to this joyful event, and used to be celebrated at midnight.

The rites connected with these primitive and solemn offices are, as I have intimated, singularly mystical. There have been two classes of writers regarding ceremonies. Some, like Du Vert, have wished to trace them all to some natural cause; others have wished to give them exclusively a symbolical and mysterious signification. It is probable that here, as usually, truth lies between the two extremes; and that, while circumstances suggested the adoption of certain expedients, the faithful ever preferred so to modify them in application, as to make them partake of that deep mysticism which they so much loved. Thus, no doubt, necessity as well as choice compelled them to use lights during those nightly celebrations; but they arranged them so as to give them a striking figurative power. In fact, Amalarius Symphosius (whom Benedict XIV. confounds with Amalarius Fortunatus, a writer early in the ninth century) tells us that in his time the church was lighted up with twenty-four candles, which were gradually extinguished, to show how the sun of justice had set; and this, he adds, we do thrice, that is on three succeeding evenings. This shows the union, even at so late an epoch, between the obvious use of these lights and their mystical application. The present disposition of them on a triangular candlestick is, however, much older than his time, and has been preserved in a manuscript *Ordo* of the seventh century, published by Mabillon. The connection between the rite and the hour in which these offices were originally celebrated, may warrant us in considering both of equal antiquity.

The midnight service of Easter Eve, now performed on Saturday morning, gives a similar coincidence, and stronger authority for this connection.

Before the mass, new fire is struck and blessed, and a large candle, known by the name of the paschal candle, being blessed by a deacon, is therewith lighted. This blessing of fire or light is a very ancient ceremony, originally practiced every Saturday, and apparently restricted to Holy Saturday in the eleventh century. In the Roman Church, however, according to Pope Zachary, in 751, this ceremony was practiced on Thursday. These observations are but cursorily made. It is the benediction of the candle which is the principal feature of this ceremonial. The beautiful prayer in which the consecration, or blessing, takes place, has been attributed to several ancient fathers: by Martene, with some degree of probability, to the great St. Augustine, who very likely only expressed better what the prayers before his time declared. It very beautifully joins the twofold object of the institutions. For, while it prays that this candle may continue burning through the night, to dispel its darkness, it speaks of it as a symbol of the fiery pillar which led the Israelites from Egypt, and of Christ, ever true and never-failing light. But the rite itself is much older than that age. Anastasius Bibliothecarius says of Pope Zozimus, in 417, that he allowed to parishes the power of blessing this candle. This, as Gretser remarks, supposes the blessing to have existed before, but to have been confined to basilicas. St. Paulinus speaks of the candle as painted according to the custom yet practiced in Rome; and Prudentius mentions its being performed in allusion, as F. Aravalo plausibly conjectures, to the incense which then, as now, was inserted in it. What still more pleads for the antiquity of this rite is the existence of it in distant Churches. For St. Gregory Nazianzen mentions it, as do other fathers, in magnificent terms.

This year, being the seventh of the pontificate of the present Pope, you will have the opportunity of witnessing another very ancient rite, only performed every seventh year of each reign. This is the blessing of the *Agnus Dei*, waxen cakes stamped with the figure of a lamb. It will take place in the Vatican Palace, on Thursday in Easter week, and a distribution of them will be made in the Sixtine chapel, on the following Saturday. The origin of this rite seems to have been the very ancient custom of breaking up the paschal candle of the preceding year, and distributing the fragments among the faithful. Durandus, one of the eldest writers on church ceremonies, tells us, that on Saturday in Holy Week, the acolytes of the Roman Church made lambs of new blessed wax, or of that of the old paschal candle, mixed with chrism, which the Pope, on the following Saturday, distributes to the faithful. He then enters upon their spiritual and mystical signification. Alcuin, our countryman, and disciple of Venerable Bede, tells us, that "in the Roman Church, early in the morning of Saturday, the archdeacon comes into the church, and pours wax into a clean vessel, and mixes it with oil, then blesses the wax, moulds it into the form of lambs, puts it by in a clean place." These, he says, "are distributed on the octave of Easter"; and he adds, "the lambs which the Romans make, represent to us the spotless lamb made for us, for Christ should be brought to our memories frequently by all sorts of things." In the ceremony, as you will witness it, the Pope himself will bless, and mingle with chrism, the figures of the Agnus Dei already prepared.

Another portion of the service, which bears us back to those earliest ages, deserves particular attention, from its being now, like the last, peculiar to Rome. It is well known to all that have ever slightly applied themselves to the study of Church history, that a system of public penance existed of old, whereby such as had scandalously transgressed God's law, were, for a time, excluded from the communion of the faithful, and subjected to a course of rigorous expiation. This penitential system is acknowledged by all to have reached back into times of persecution, for we have repeated mention of it in Tertullian, the oldest Latin ecclesiastical writer; and we possess entire treatises, or epistles, of the glorious martyr, St. Cyprian, regarding it. The Catholic Church has everywhere preserved the ceremony whereby the public penance was enforced, to wit, on Ash-Wednesday: so called, from ashes having been, on that day, placed on the public penitents' heads, as now they are on those of all the faithful, with the very same words, "Remember that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return." The course of penance, thus enjoined, might last many years: but, unless shortened by an indulgence, or brought to a close upon danger of death, or of persecution, the reconciliation of the penitents always took place within Holy Week. St. Jerome tells us, that Maundy-Thursday was the day fixed for this solemn absolution, and Pope Innocent I. confirms this observation. St. Ambrose, however, observes, that the rite sometimes took place on Wednesday, Friday, or some other day in Holy Week.

A remnant of this ancient custom has been scrupulously preserved here. For, on the afternoons of Wednesday and Thursday, the cardinal-penitentiary proceeds in state to the basilicas of Sta. Maria Maggiore and St. Peter; and, seated on a tribunal reserved for that purpose, receives the confession, or other application, of such as may wish to advise with him and obtain spiritual relief, in matters reserved to his jurisdiction.

Another, and a still more interesting, usage of those primitive times, is yet retained in the Roman Church, almost exclusively. In the early ages, baptism was solemnly administered only twice in the year, on the eves of Easter and Pentecost. The adult catechumens were carefully instructed in the Christian faith; although many important dogmas were withheld from their knowledge till after baptism. On Holy Saturday, or Easter Eve, they proceeded to the church, under the guidance of the deacons who had prepared them. Twelve lessons from the Old Testament, descriptive of God's providential dealings with man, were then read in Greek and Latin, during which they received their final instruction in the faith. After this, the baptismal font was blessed with many solemn ceremonies. Thus far the rite is universal, to the extent that circumstances will permit: the lessons are everywhere recited, or sung, and the font is blessed wherever the privilege of having one exists. But in Rome, the ancient usage is imitated to the end. For, solemn baptism is always administered to converts, who are reserved for that occasion, generally Jews, of whom a certain number yearly enter into the Catholic Church. This takes place in the baptistery of Constantine, adjoining the patriarchal basilica of St. John Lateran.

Such are the principal points in the ceremonial of Holy Week, which can be traced with sufficient probability to the oldest period of the Church, when she yet was in an humble and persecuted state: and they clearly bear the impress of her condition and feelings. The midnight assemblies still commemorated, both in her sacred offices and in the Eucharistic celebration, show the state of alarm in which she then existed; and the mystical signification given to institutions, in a manner dictated by necessity, exhibits the depth and nobleness of idea which even then regulated her in her worship. The commemoration of that solemnity wherewith she received repentant sinners back to her peace, is a record of the purity which distinguished all her members, and the zeal for virtue which animated her pastors. In fine, the rare and cautious initiation of her catechumens through the sacrament of baptism, from danger of their betraying the secrets of religion, is commemorated in the lessons, and still more in the actual rite as performed here on Holy Saturday. And thus, too, at Rome, there is a consistency in the entire office of Easter, not to be found elsewhere, inasmuch as the Liturgy, during the following week, prays most especially for those who have been just born again of water and the Holy Ghost, that they may persevere in the faith; and the Sunday immediately following Easter is still called, everywhere, *Dominica in albis*, "Sunday of the white garments," as on it, the new baptized should lay aside the white robe, put on them, by most ancient usage, on their baptism. And this reminds me of another ceremonial, not quite so ancient, but still reaching to the fifth century. I allude to the custom of the neophytes, after baptism, going to visit the tomb of the holy apostles at the Vatican. Ennodius of Pavia mentions this as a custom in his time. "See," he observes. "how the watery chamber (the baptistery) sends forth its white-robed troops to the portable chair of the apostolical confession."

Under Constantine the Church gained freedom, and the right to breathe, and still more the power of expanding her outward form and displaying all her beauty. To this period belong many of the functions of Holy Week, one or two of which deserve more particular notice; and first is the act of solemn veneration shown to the cross of Christ on Good Friday, known by the name of "The Adoration of the Cross." Two things seem to deserve particular notice, the origin of the ceremony, and the term applied to it.

When Helen, the emperor's mother, discovered the cross of Christ in his sepulchre, we are told that it was exposed to the veneration of the faithful. From this moment the custom arose in the Church of Jerusalem, and from it spread so rapidly over the East and West as to become very soon universal. St. Paulinus informs us, that once a year the portion of the same cross preserved there was solemnly brought out, and that this was at Easter; and he defines the day more accurately, by saying it was on the day which celebrated the mystery of the cross, that is Good Friday. St. Gregory of Tours mentions the same custom. This rite was soon adopted at Constantinople, where a portion of the same cross was offered to the veneration of the faithful in the church of St. Sophia, as Ven. Bede and other writers inform us. Indeed, the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus has described minutely the ceremonies used on that occasion. Leo Allatius has proved the prevalence of the custom among other nations in the East. Cardinal Borgia published a manuscript preserved in the Propaganda, and written in Syriac, entitled "The rite of saluting the Cross as observed in the Syrian Church at Antioch." Two other copies of the ceremonial, formerly belonging to the Maronite College, are now in the Vatican Library, and amply attest the prevalence of this rite in the oriental Church. Naironus, himself a Syrian, has minutely described the ceremony as performed by the Maronites, or ancient Christians of Mount Libanus, on this very day. The ritual is entitled, "Order of the Adoration of the Cross," and is prescribed to be observed on Good Friday. The proclamation and prayers are nearly word for word the same as ours, and after them the cross is placed on a seat or cushion in the church, and surrounded by two priests and two deacons, who sing the Trisagion, or "thrice holy," before mentioned, just as you will find observed in the Pontifical chapel.

The exact conformity of rites, and even words, in the liturgies of different countries, is a strong presumptive argument of great antiquity. In fact, this rite seems to have been soon adopted in the Western Church; for we find it mentioned in the Sacramentary of Pope Gelasius, the most ancient existing, as approved and corrected by the learned Muratori. The antiphon now used at the ceremony is in the Antiphonary of St. Gregory, and in the Roman order, which Mabillon refers to that Pontiff's time. What farther confirms the origin of this rite from the custom of the Church of Jerusalem is, that the expressions used in it clearly refer to the true cross there preserved: "Behold the wood of the cross whereon our salvation hung." We have then clearly, in this instance, a ceremonial expressive of the triumph of Christianity—of the exaltation of its sacred emblem above every other badge, a proclamation of the principle, that through it alone salvation was wrought, the vindication of it from ignominy and hatred, which, for three centuries, had been its lot, and the paying of a public tribute of honor, love, and veneration to Him who hung upon it, in reparation of the blasphemy, and, in His disciples, persecution, wherewith He had been visited. All these are precisely the natural feelings of the age, which first saw Christianity not only free, but triumphant; and which, having discovered the very instruments of redemption, would have acted unfeelingly, if, like the murderers of our Lord, it had allowed them to be again thrown into oblivion, and had not displayed, in their presence, some of the affectionate sentiments inspired by the event which they attested.

But I may be asked, why make this declaration of sentiment in so strong a form, and why give it so grating a name as "adoration"? In fairness, I should send any one asking such a question, for his answer, to them who first introduced the rite, and with it the name. For, had we brought it in, since this word sounds harsh, we might, peradventure, deserve blame, as not having regard to others' feelings. But if a word changes its meaning, after we have adopted it, it would argue great weakness and fickleness of purpose in us to abandon it, as it supposes some extravagance in those who ask us to do it. For it is meet on the contrary, that, amidst the fluctuations and changes in speech, some landmarks should remain to ascertain the original meanings of words; which would not be the case if every use of them varied with them. Our lawyers and our statutes choose to preserve the old words of our language, even where custom has long since changed their meaning, when they speak of the *seizin* of an estate to signify its lawful possession; or of *letting* a man do an action, when they mean to signify preventing it. As the dialect of law, so is that of religion; or rather this is far more unchangeable, as are its purposes; and as the Church has chosen to preserve the Latin language rather than adopt the later tongues that have sprung up, so has she in this kept her words as she first found them, and not altered them when men have given them new meanings. The same principle has prevented either change.

Now, wherever the rite of venerating the cross of Christ has been introduced, it has ever borne that maligned title of "adoration." Nay, I can show you, that in the East and West this expression was used, even when the hatred to idolatry was the strongest. Lactantius, or the author of a most ancient poem upon the Passion, thus exclaims—

> "Flecte genu, lignumque crucis venerabile adora."

"Bend the knee, and adore the venerable wood of the cross." An ancient martyr is described by Bishop Simeon, as thus addressing his judge: "I and my daughter were baptized in the Holy Trinity, and his cross I adore; and for him," that is Christ, "I will willingly die, as will my daughter." This passage is from an oriental writer, who surely would not have put into a martyr's mouth, about to die for refusing to worship idolatrously, words which savored themselves of that heinous crime. The Greeks used the very same word. For in the old Greek version of St. Ephrem, who was the most ancient Syriac father, and which was made, if not in his lifetime, very soon after, we find these words, "The cross ruleth, which all nations adore, and all people."

The word, therefore, signified veneration, and the rite must be more ancient than the modern meaning of "supreme worship," which it now bears. And it would be as foolish in us to change the word, because others have changed its meaning, as it would be for the Anglicans to alter the marriage rite, where the bride and bridegroom declare, that with their bodies they worship one another; because the Presbyterians, or rather Independents of Cromwell, would have *worship* paid to no man; or, because in modern speech, the word is restricted to divine service. But if any one should prefer to give our word its ordinary meaning, I have no great objection, provided he will allow us, who surely have the right to determine the object toward which our homage and adoration tend,—to wit, Him who hung and bled and died upon the cross, and not its material substance. Nor would such a distinction savor of modern refinement and sophistry, seeing it is that of St. Jerome, who thus speaks of Paula, in her epitaph: "Prostrate before our Lord's cross, she so adored, as though she beheld our Lord himself hanging thereon." The fathers of the seventh general council fully explain this matter, and vindicate the words and forms in which this worship is at present exhibited. Thus much has seemed necessary, to prevent any of you being withheld, by any mistaken feelings, from fully valuing this most ancient and venerable recollection of the first liberation of Christianity from the house of temporal bondage, and its first erection of a public triumphant worship. To this same period, I think, we may safely refer the use of processions, especially that of Palm Sunday; for it, like the foregoing, is to be found, immediately after, universal throughout the Church. For in the East they have, from the earliest ages, practiced the ceremony of carrying palm and olive branches to the church on Lazarus Saturday, as the eve of Palm Sunday used to be called, and having them blessed the next day. At Constantinople it was customary for the emperor to distribute the palms with great solemnity to all his courtiers. In Rome it would seem, from old documents published by Mabillon, that originally the blessing of the palms for the papal chapel took place in a small church, called Our Lady of the Tower, (Sta. Maria ad Turrim,) from its being situated beside the belfry of the old Vatican church, and that thence the procession moved and ended at the high altar of St. Peter's. It may not be out of place to mention, that, anciently, the ceremonies of each day used to be performed in different churches, with the Pope's attendance, and that the memory of this circumstance, unimportant as it may be, has been carefully recorded in the service. For, to that of each day, you will find prefixed the title of a church, as the station of the day; that is, as the place where the pontiff and the faithful stood to pray. But, for some centuries, this custom has been disused; and all the functions have been reunited in the Vatican and its chapels.

Martene had affirmed, that no trace of the ceremonies of this Sunday could be discovered in the Roman Church before the eighth or even the ninth century. But this assertion has been fully refuted by Cardinal Tommasi, Meratus, and others. For the old Roman calendar, published by Martene himself, as belonging to the fourth or fifth century, mentions the palms and the station at St. John's. In the Sacramentary of St. Gregory, the prayer mentions the palm-branches borne in their hands by the faithful.

This again is a ceremony strongly bearing, like the one before described, the signet of its age, beautifully characteristic of the season of triumph and pre-eminence which the Church had begun to enjoy: and an apt record of that feeling in which it could take part in the glories of its acknowledged Lord, as well as sympathize with Him in His sufferings.

In the service of Good Friday, we have a little fragment which belongs to a period somewhat later than the foregoing, and betrays its origin by its language. This is the *Trisagion*, sung alternately with the *Improperia*, both of which I have several times had occasion to mention. The Scripture has more than once recorded the song of the spirits, who stand nearest to God's throne, as being an unceasing repetition of "holy" thrice pronounced. This formula of solemn veneration the Church soon adopted in her daily liturgy, where it yet remains. In the time of Theodosius an epithet was added to each of these exclamations, and a prayer for mercy at the conclusion. The Greek Menology not only records this date, but gives a marvellous account of the origin of the triple invocation. It tells us that, in the reign of Theodosius, the city of Constantinople was visited by a frightful earthquake and apparently a whirlwind, in which a boy was caught and raised aloft in the air. The emperor and the patriarch Proclus were present, with an immense multitude, and cried out in the usual form of supplication, "Kyrie eleison," "Lord, have mercy upon us." The child came down safe, and called aloud to them to sing the Trisagion, or "thrice holy" in this manner: "Holy God! Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal." He had scarcely finished these words when he expired. Whatever may be thought of this legend, there can be no objection to the date which it supposes; and certain it is, that, from that time, it has often and often been repeated in different parts of the Greek ritual. Thence it passed into the office of Good Friday, where it is repeated both in Greek and Latin;—another proof of antiquity, as it must have been admitted before the separation of the two Churches by Photius.

After this period we begin to plunge into the obscurity of an age less distinct in its historical monuments. It becomes extremely difficult to assign the exact date of these ceremonies, which, during it, sprang up, or to discover the authors of the beautiful canticles then inserted into the service. Yet this darkness is not without its interest; and powerfully attests the spirit of those ages in regard to religion. For a difficulty in ascertaining the origin of certain rites proceeds from the gradual, and almost imperceptible, manner in which they were communicated from Church to Church. The love of dangerous innovation had not yet appeared; and it had not been thought necessary to repress any manifestation of devout feeling which might accidentally spring up in particular places, from an assurance that it would be innocent, and strictly according with sound doctrine. In this manner, each great Church came to have its own peculiarities; and if they were really worthy of the honor, were soon embraced, at least in part, by others; and so being sifted through the experience of ages, that which was best came to be universally kept, and the less perfect went into disuse, till a certain uniformity was introduced.

The same is to be said of the hymns and other compositions of the middle ages, as they are called; beautiful specimens whereof have been preserved in the Holy Week service; but here is an additional obstacle to our discovery of their origin. For, as in the former, there was no particular necessity for ascertaining the Church from which any special ceremony was received; so here the modesty, or, more Christianly to speak, the humility, of the authors, led them to conceal, in every way, their names; so that while every one admires those sweet, and often sublime compositions, such as are also the *Dies Iræ*, *Stabat Mater*, etc., hardly one can be attributed to its author with any degree of certainty. The causes of obscurity are thus shown to attest the spirit of this age, in the close communion and charitable bond, without envy and jealousy, of different Churches, and in the humility and true modesty of its saints and sages.

But the functions and ceremonies of this period may be considered in another light, no less important and interesting; as the remains of customs once universal, or very general, but during those ages abolished, yet preserved monumentally in this particular season. In this manner, they are not institutions so much as fragments or remnants of old liturgical forms, which would have disappeared entirely but for this care. Let us illustrate this view by a few examples.

It is well known, that, for several centuries, the communion was generally administered to the faithful under both kinds. Not, indeed, that this was at all considered necessary for the validity, or even integrity of the sacrament, for it would be easy to prove, by many passages and histories, that it was often given in only one form. Many circumstances, which it is not necessary to detail, conspired to induce the Church to adopt, in lay communion, the form of bread only. I will content myself with one circumstance, which seems to me worthy of notice, as an additional justification of the restriction, after what has been repeatedly urged with success. The Christian religion is one for all times and all places; and its sacraments should be such as to suit this universality of its destination. Now, there are numberless situations in which the faithful would be deprived of the Eucharist, could it be lawfully and validly administered only in both forms. For instance, in the interior of China and Siam, with the neighboring countries, almost always in a state of persecution, there are at least half a million of Catholics. Not to consider the obstacles, arising from a state of persecution, to a cultivation, which would betray its object, and consequently defeat it, every attempt to rear the vine has failed in these countries; and the missionaries are obliged to depend for their sacramental wine, on the small quantities which can, with risk even of life, be clandestinely conveyed over the frontier, after it has come from very distant lands. Nay, they are often, especially in the interior, for a long time unable to celebrate mass, on account of this difficulty. There can be no doubt that this multitude of poor afflicted faithful, standing more in need than others of spiritual nourishment, would have to live and die without the comfort of this sacrament, if the partaking of both species were absolutely necessary. But to return; with the exception of a particular privilege granted to some sovereigns at their coronation, almost the only example of the chalice being received by any except the celebrating priest, occurs in the pontifical mass on Easter Sunday, when the deacon and subdeacon partake of the cup after the Pope.

But there is another observance connected with this matter, which has been preserved only here. One of the reasons, which led to the restriction of communion to one species only, was the accidents to which the other was liable. For communion being a practice even now, and, much more anciently, of almost daily use in churches, and on many occasions frequented by thousands, it was almost impossible to prevent some portion of the consecrated wine being spilt, especially when received by the ruder sort. To remedy this inconvenience, to some extent, the practice was introduced, probably after the sixth century, of administering the chalice through a silver tube; so that the cup being held steadily in the priest's or deacon's hand, and only the tube placed to the receiver's mouth, there would be but little comparative danger of an accident, which the Catholic belief concerning the Eucharist must render particularly distressing. This tube was called a siphon. Casalius informs us, that the Abbot of Monte Casino used to receive the chalice in this manner. Paul Volzius first discovered this to have been a usual practice, from its being prescribed in an old book of signs (*Liber Signorum*) extant in many Benedictine houses. Among the oldest rules of the Carthusians, contemporary with St. Bernard, we have this order in the fortieth chapter: "Let no church possess any ornaments of gold or silver, except the chalice, and the tube through which the blood of our Lord is received." An old commentator on Tertullian mentions an inventory of the church of Mainz, written nearly 800 years ago, in which are enumerated, among the gold crosses and chalices, six silver tubes used for the same purpose. The use of this tube has been gradually abandoned everywhere, except in the pontifical mass celebrated by the Pope three times a year, of which one takes place on Easter-day. The custom of thus receiving the sacred cup often, appears novel and strange to persons unaccustomed to it; but it is a matter of interest to the lover of ecclesiastical antiquity, who would not willingly allow old usages to be abolished, especially in this their last hold and proper refuge.

I will instance another point of ancient practice, once probably common to every church, but now hardly observed except in St. Peter's. The altars are everywhere formally stripped on Holy Thursday, and remain uncovered until the following Saturday. During Tenebræ on Thursday evening, each of the canons, and other functionaries of St. Peter's, receives a species of brush curiously made of chip, and after the office, the entire chapter proceeds to the high altar, where seven flagons of wine and water have been prepared. These are poured upon the altar, and the canons, passing six at a time before it, rub it all over with their brushes, after which it is washed with sponges and dried. Saint Isidore, of Seville, in the seventh century, mentions the custom of washing the altars, and even the pavement, of the church on this day, in commemoration of that act of humility, by which our Redeemer washed His disciples' feet; and St. Eligius records, in similar terms, both the practice and the motive. The Roman *Ordo*, Abbot Rupert, and other writers, speak of this ceremony as commonly practiced; and many documents of the middle ages show it to have been observed at Sienna, Benevento, Bologna, and other churches. It was no less practiced in England; for the Sarum Missal thus describes it: "After dinner, let all the clerks meet in the church to wash the altars. First, let water be blessed out of choir and privately. Then let two of the most dignified priests be prepared, with a deacon and subdeacon, and two acolytes, all vested in albs and amices, and let two clerks bear wine and water, and let them begin with the high altar and wash it, pouring thereon wine and water." After a minute description of the prayers to be said in the course of the ceremony, the rubric proceeds: "After the gospel has been sung as at mass, the two aforesaid priests shall wash the feet of all in choir, one on one side and another on the other, and then shall do the same mutually." Many prayers are then said, and another gospel read, during which it is said, "the brethren shall drink the cup of charity, *charitatis potum*."

In the many learned treatises written upon the origin of this ceremony, this curious union of two practices, elsewhere divided between morning and afternoon, has been overlooked, though it is the strongest confirmation of St. Isidore's interpretation against the objections of Du Vert, Batelli, and others. In the Greek Church the practice is still observed, as Leo Allatius has proved at length, as it is among the Dominicans and Carmelites. But almost everywhere else it has disappeared, except in the Vatican basilica, where you may see it practiced on Thursday evening.

These examples will suffice to show how the ceremonies of Holy Week, as performed in the Vatican, have preserved rites formerly very general in the Church, but which would have been almost entirely lost in practice, had they not been here jealously observed. There is another great historical point, of which testimony has been recorded in these sacred functions, and which, therefore, must not be passed over. This is the ancient union between the Latin and Greek Churches, and the reconciliation after the latter's defection. Of the former, evidence is given in the use of Greek words and phrases in the Liturgy: one instance, the *Kyrie Eleison*, belongs to every day; you have seen, in the adoption of the Greek *Trisagion*, a testimony peculiar to the service of Holy Week. Anciently, there were other instances; as, for example, the one to which I before alluded, when I said that the lessons on Holy Saturday, intended for the catechumens' instruction, used to be sung in both languages. Anastasius Bibliothecarius tells us that Benedict III. had a book written, in which were the Greek and Latin lessons, to be sung on Holy Saturday. Mabillon has brought abundant evidence of this usage, which is mentioned by Amalarius about the year 812, and several other writers of the following centuries. Later, it would appear that the double recitation was confined to the first of the twelve lessons, as otherwise the service would have been excessively long. We find indeed, in the eleventh century, the clause added to this rubric, "Si Dominus Papa velit" (if our Lord the Pope wishes it); and thus, probably, by its not being often required, the custom gradually disappeared. The same may be said of the practice which formerly prevailed of singing the epistle and gospel in Greek as well as Latin, on Good Friday. Both these observances were revived in the last century, by Pope Benedict XIII., who was most studious and tenacious of ancient rites, but relapsed into desuetude after his time. However desirable it might be to have these old usages restored, I think these circumstances can hardly fail to strike the eye, as strongly illustrating the historical view I am taking to-day of these offices and functions. For we see, on the one hand, that the Church has carefully kept all that she received from the Greek Church, in relation to the worship of Him who cannot change; for, whatever prayers she was used to recite in that language, she did not allow any feelings toward that, her rebellious daughter, and now bitter adversary, to abolish. But such instruction as used to be recited in that tongue, for the edification of strangers who spoke it, and happened to be present, she allowed to drop, without any act of angry abrogation, into neglect, as no longer of use. When, however, the Greek Church, in the council of Florence, was reunited to her, and owned obedience to the Holy See, it was decreed that the Pope, on solemn occasions, should be served by a Greek as well as a Latin deacon and subdeacon, and that the gospel and epistle should be sung in both languages. This regulation has been ever since duly observed, as you will see on Easter-day; when two Greek attendants, vested in the sacred robes of their own nation, (the deacon wearing the stole, as of old, upon his left shoulder, and having embroidered on it the word "holy," thrice repeated,) will sing those two portions of the Liturgy in the Greek language and chant. This completes the history of the connection between the two Churches. The old prayers, once common to both, and yet retained by us, give evidence of former union. The silent abolition of the instructions given in that language, attests the subsequent separation; and the rite prescribed to commemorate the reunion, not only records that event, but by its continuance, acts as a protest against the perfidy which violated the solemn stipulations there made, and proves the readiness of the Roman Church to keep up to all her engagements.

The principle by which I have endeavored to show that the offices of the Holy Week, especially as performed in Rome, ought to be viewed, is the consideration of them as monumental observances sprung up in different ages, and accurately recording the condition and feeling of each. Nothing but a divine enactment can give to the external forms of worship an invariable character, such as in great measure was bestowed upon that of Israel. Of any command or direction to give a specific ritual, we have no trace in the new law; and the Church, ever true to the finest principles of nature, after prescribing all that was essential and necessary for the sacraments—allowed the instinctive and rational feelings of man to have their play, watching carefully over their suggestions, that they should not lead to error or impropriety, and thus gradually formed its code of religious and ceremonial observances, as every good constitution has ever been formed, from the development of sound fundamental principles, through the experimental knowledge accumulated by ages. Was it wrong in so doing? This, indeed, is a question, which my next and last discourse will better give materials to solve, when I speak of the influence which the offices of this week have exercised upon the social and moral world. But at present I may safely ask, does the parallel I have just intimated suggest that it was wrong? Is not that form of rule, political and judicial, in *our* estimation most perfect, which among us has risen in most ancient times, and has retained upon and within itself the impressions and experiences of ages, different in purpose and in spirit? We love to trace our jury to the institutions of the Saxons; our forefathers for years revered and demanded the laws of good King Edward. We abolish not easily the words and phrases introduced by the Normans, though in a speech no longer our own; the crier in our courts proclaims in French, and the king agrees to, or dissents from, parliamentary enactments in that language. Our law of treason, one of the most perfect, we owe to the third Edward; and the rights of the subject took all the time from John to William III. to be fully developed. Every different state, every change in character, every variation of feeling, which successive vicissitudes produced in the nation, is to be traced, as upon so many monuments, in our laws, usages, and public practices The old oppression of the forest-laws no effort has been able to cancel entirely from our code; in spite of modern ridicule, baronial rights and feudal practices yet attest our former constitution under their influence; the municipal charters of our cities form progressive monuments of the development of power, which the burghers gradually attained by industrious commerce; our guilds and companies yet record the spirit of religious confraternity, which originally suggested them; the universities have, almost in their own despite, preserved the forms, institutions, and practices of their

Catholic founders; the Presbyterian rigor of certain religious observances is yet struggling with public good sense, to deepen the morose wrinkles which it once left, so as not to be effaced, upon the frank, smooth brow of former generations. We have thus our history, our changes, our variable feelings throughout successive generations, recorded on our public institutions. Would any one for a moment entertain the idea, that the whole should, "at one fell swoop," be abolished, and a stiff, stark, "*Code-Napoleon*" system of law be introduced, duly divided into "titles," sections, and articles, upon every possible subject, social and domestic, from the sovereign's rights to the clerk's fees for a certificate; all bearing the impress of only one age's, or one man's mind? Would not this be considered sacrilegious? Would it not be abolishing our history, disowning our fathers, abrogating our former existence, blotting out our monuments and saying, like a child whose fabric of cards has fallen, "I will begin anew"? A similar train of reflections I have wished to suggest respecting the offices and functions of Holy Week. I have represented these to you as an aggregate of religious observances, gradually framed in the Church, not by a cold and formal enactment, but by the fervid manifestation of the devout impressions of every age, till they had acquired a uniform, consistent, and compact form. They have retained upon them the marks of that humbled, and yet deeply mystical spirit, which the persecuted Church necessarily possessed; they have preserved the expression of triumph and glory of its more prosperous condition; they have concealed in them symptoms of the modesty and charity of the later period, and they are depositaries of many relics of venerable antiquity, by yet keeping in observance rites once general, but now elsewhere abolished.

In attending them, you may consider yourselves as led by turns to every period of religious antiquity, and in the institutions of each may commune with its peculiar spirit; they are as a museum, containing the remains of every age, not arranged chronologically, but, as the good taste that presided over the collections has suggested, their disposition mingled in a happy confusion, which shows how well they harmonize with each other, and how completely the same spirit has presided over the institution of them all. To abolish them, to substitute a new, systematic, formal, and coldly meditated form, would be in truth a vandalism, a religious barbarism, of which the Catholic Church is quite incapable.

There yet remains another view of these offices and ceremonies, more interesting and more important than any I have yet treated of, and this shall form the subject of my concluding discourse.

RELIGIOUS VIEW OF THESE FUNCTIONS.

The influence of Holy Week upon public morals—On the conduct of princes—Pardoning of injuries—Their mildening influence during the Middle Ages—Their action extended over the entire year—The Truce of God—Influence of the celebration of these functions upon the interior life—Devotion to the Cross—Conclusion.

WERE I to let my subject remain where last we left it, justly might I be charged with having deceived fair expectation. For, till now, I have spoken of the functions which on Palm Sunday will begin, as of things beautiful and venerable; while of their holiness I have not as yet spoken. But greatly would your conception of them fall below their worth, and sadly should I have failed in discharging my duty, were you, on departing hence, for the last time, to consider them only as objects wherewith the painter's eye may be entranced, or the musician's ear bewitched, or the poet's and antiquarian's mind pleased and instructed; and not rather as sacred institutions by which the Christian's soul may be improved and perfected. For, after all, it is not to a mere display of outward ceremonial, framed never so artfully, or conceived never so sublimely, that you are summoned, but to assist at a solemn commemoration of your Redeemer's most sorrowful passion and death. Whatever of beauty there may be in the exterior forms of this commemoration, whatever pathos in its sounds, whatever poetry in its words, whatever feeling in its action, is but owing to the ruling thought, the spirit of devotion and piety which forms its soul, and has breathed its own influence through these its manifestations. Vain, indeed, and foolish, and ministering unto evil, are all such things, unless a high destination consecrate, or at least ennoble them; but where shall they find a higher sphere, or an occasion worthier of their heavenly power, than in the scenes which commemorate the grandest and most pathetic of all Christian mysteries? When our blessed Saviour expired, it would seem as though divine power were exerted to bring into harmony with the moment the appearances of nature. The sky was darkened, and the earth trembled, and rocks were rent, and sepulchres opened, that whatever was seen or heard might sympathize with the main action of the awful tragedy. It would have been painfully unnatural, and discordant, had the catastrophe taken place wherein nature's Author suffered, amid the liquid splendors of a spring-day's noon, while flowers were opening at the foot, and birds chirping their connubial songs round the head of His Cross. And it is in a similar spirit that the Church, His spouse, observes annually the representation of this heart-rending sight, seeking to attune the accessories and circumstances thereof to the melancholy and solemn depth of sentiment which it must inevitably infuse. Therefore are these days of fasting and humiliation; for who would feast and riot when his Lord is refreshed only with vinegar and gall? They are days bare of all costly apparel and religious splendor; for who would be gayly vested when his Saviour's seamless garment is cast for with lots? They are days of lamentation and lugubrious strains; for who would bear to hear joyful melodies in commemoration of sighs and groans uttered over sin?

It is then no more than natural feeling purified by religious principle, which guided the Church through succeeding ages, in gradually framing that commemorative service which will occupy Holy Week. Art received its lessons from her under this influence, and hence all the circumstances have been made to accord with the greater and solemner event which they surround.

And after having employed discourses upon the less important considerations, it may seem but little proportioned to the relative value of things, that, into one, I should endeavor to compress whatever regards the main purpose of them all. For you have not forgotten, I trust, that I reserved to this my last discourse, to treat of the offices and ceremonies of Holy Week in a religious point of view; or, as I explained myself, to consider them " as intended to excite virtuous and devout impression." This portion of my task is attended with many difficulties. For, at first sight, it would appear rather to belong to a more sacred place than this; it partakes of emotions which a sermon, rather than an essay, should aim at exciting; and the impropriety of assuming a tone unbecoming the place and circumstances of our here assembling, must act as a curb upon that bolder and more appealing form of address which would better suit the theme. I feel, too, at present, as though whatever I have said, till now, should in some sort prejudice me in what remains. For, if my former discourses have made any impression, they will have prepared your mind for watching the beautiful combination of art and feeling which I have striven to show you in these ceremonials; and it is hard for the eye to be keen in examination, and the heart, at the same time, tender to emotion. I fear me, therefore, that, the two appearing incompatible, the one may be preferred, to the prejudice of the better. And, in fact, it is not once or twice attending such functions, that can allow the mind simultaneously to act through the various organs of perception here called into play, so as to admit a general result from their combination. It is only when, after a time, it hath been familiarized with the outward appearance, till, novelty being worn out, it seems to our minds the most obvious and natural form it can assume, that leisure is left for meditation, amid the paintings, the music, and the ceremonial of these offices. And meditation is the only means through which the religious feelings to them belonging can be properly reached.

I shall, therefore, perhaps, require a greater share of your indulgence when I appear to come up even less than in any preceding discourses to the greatness of my subject. I have already expressed my view, when I proposed to treat of our coming solemnities, as intended to convey virtuous and devout impressions.

These two epithets must not be considered as inadvertently placed; for they represent two divisions of my subject, and consequently of my discourse. I consider the one as expressive of the external, and the other of the internal, influence of these institutions. Virtue is, indeed, an inward principle, but strongly regulates our relations with others; devotion is a feeling of whose extent and intenseness God and our own souls can alone be conscious. Virtuous conduct may be noticed in communities or masses of men; while devotion is properly an individual possession. I will endeavor to show how both have been, and may be, nourished by the solemn and detailed commemoration of Holy Week.

Who shall gainsay, that men are powerfully acted on by formal and external acts that represent inward feelings, although even the latter be not excited? In times of bloody, and often causeless strife, who knows not that homage and fealty, solemnly given, bound men often to loyalty and liege bearing, more almost than principle? It was not perhaps, sometimes, that the proud baron, or the monarch, who held a fief, felt much the religious obligation of an oath; it was not that they feared punishment for its violation, but there was a solemn force in the very act of homage, in the placing of hand within hand, and plighting faith upon the bended knee, and with the attendance of a court.

Far more worth than all this circumstance, would have been a stronger inward conviction of obligation; but such is man, that the determinations of his fickle heart require some outward steadying by formal declarations. Who knows not how much the coronation ceremony has done for fastening the crown upon the heads of kings; how the pretender to a nation hath fought bloody battles to have it done on him in the proper place; and how maidens have fought with knightly prowess, that the rightful owner should, in his turn, receive it? And has not the wavering fidelity of subjects been secured by the fear of raising a hand against God's anointed? And in all this, which is not of divine or Scriptural institution, who sees anything less than wholesome, as conducing to the strengthening of sentiments in themselves virtuous and publicly useful?

In some respects similar is the institution of a season set apart for outwardly exhibiting those feelings, which should ever animate the Christian soul toward his crucified Redeemer. It must be greatly conducive to public virtue, to appoint a time when all men, even the wicked, must humble themselves, and act virtue. It is a homage to the moral power, an acknowledgment, at least, of its right to rule; a recognition of a public voice in virtue, which can stand on the highway, and command even her enemies to obey her laws. It is, moreover, a compulsion to thought: many a virtuous life hath been led in earnest, whose beginning had been in mockery and scorn. You have always gained much upon the soul, when you have brought the behavior to what becomes it. Now, all this hath the setting aside one week to the commemoration of Christ's passion effected; because being not merely proposed to the mind, but represented in such a way as to oblige men to attend, with certain proprieties of deportment, and acting moreover on the public feelings of society, it produces a restraint and a tone of conduct which must prove beneficial. But examples will illustrate this better than words.

St. Bernard clearly intimates, that the most abandoned, and even those who had no idea of an effectual reform, were yet compelled, by public decency, to abstain from vice during the entire Lent, and more especially during the concluding season. "The lovers of the world," he exclaims, in his second sermon on the Resurrection, "the enemies of the Cross of Christ, through this time of Lent, long after Easter, that they, alas! may indulge in pleasure. . . . . Wretches! thus honor ye Christ whom ye have received? Ye have prepared a dwelling for Him at His coming, confessing your sins with groans, chastening your bodies and giving alms, and, behold, ye traitorously betray Him, or force Him to go out by readmitting your former wickedness. Now, should Easter require less reverence than Passion-tide? But it is plain that ye honor neither. For if ye suffered with Him, ye could reign with Him; if with Him ye died, with Him ye would rise again. But now, only, from the custom of this time, and from a certain simulation, hath that humiliation proceeded, which spiritual exultation followeth not." He then exhorts all to perseverance in the course of virtue which they had assumed. But it is evident, from these words, that the scandal of vice was arrested by the public solemnization of this time.

It has been the custom, too, during these days, consecrated by the remembrance of Christ's passion, for sovereigns to lay aside their state, and proclaim, before their subjects, the equality of all men when viewed upon Mount Calvary. When the Emperor Heraclius recovered from

King Chosroes the relics of Golgotha, and bore them himself in triumph to the Holy City, old historians tell us how, arrived at the gate, he found himself, of a sudden, unable to proceed. Then the patriarch, Zachary, who was beside him, spoke to him, saying, "You are bearing the Cross shod and crowned, and clad in costly robes; but He who bore it here before you, was barefoot, crowned with thorns, and meanly attired." Upon hearing which words, the emperor cast aside his shoes and crown, and all other regal state, and entered the city to the church.

The spirit of this reproof was fully felt in later times through every Christian country. In many, no one is allowed to go in a carriage during the last days of Holy Week; at Naples this is yet observed, and the king and royal family, for that time, are reduced, as to outward pomp, to the level of their subjects. "Now," says a modern German author, speaking of Lent, "the songs of joy gave place to the seven penitential psalms; the plentiful board was exchanged for strict temperance, and the superfluity given to the poor. Instead of the music of the bower and hall, the chant of 'Miserere' was heard, with the eloquent warnings of the preacher. Forty days' fast overcame the people's lust: kings, princes, and lords were humbled with their domestics, and dressed in black instead of their gorgeous habits. In Holy Week, the mourning was still more strongly expressed; the church became more solemn; the fast stricter; no altar was decorated; no bell sounded, and no pompous equipage rolled in the streets. Princes and vassals, rich and poor, went on foot, in habits of deep mourning. On Palm Sunday, after reading out of the history of Christ, every one bore his palm, and nothing else was heard but the sufferings of the Messiah. After receiving the blessed sacrament on Maundy-Thursday, bishops, priests, kings, and princes proceeded to wash the feet of the poor, and to serve them at table."

In the life of that most amiable and holy princess, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, we have the following account of her practices during these days: "Nothing can express the fervor, love, and pious veneration, with which she celebrated those holy days, on which the Church, by ceremonies so touching and so expressive, recalls to the mind of the faithful, the sorrowful and unspeakable mystery of our redemption. On Holy Thursday, imitating the King of kings, who, on this day, rising from table, laid aside His garments, the daughter of the king of Hungary, putting off whatever could remind her of worldly pomps, dressed herself in poor clothes, and, with only sandals on her feet, went to visit different churches. On this day, she washed the feet of twelve poor men, sometimes lepers, and gave to each twelve pieces, a white dress, and a loaf.

"All the next night she passed in prayer and meditation upon our Lord's passion. In the morning, it being the day on which the divine sacrifice was accomplished, she said to her attendants, 'This day is a day of humiliation for all; I desire that none of you do show me any mark of respect.' Then she would put on the same dress as before, and go barefoot to the churches, taking with her certain little packets of linen, incense, and small tapers; and, kneeling before one altar, would place thereon of these; and, prostrating herself, would pray awhile most devoutly, and so pass to another altar, till she had visited all. At the door of the church she gave large alms, but was pushed about by the crowd, who did not know her. Some courtiers reproached her for the meanness of her gifts, as unworthy of a sovereign. But though, at other times, her alms-deeds were most abundant, so that few ever were more splendidly liberal to the poor, yet a certain divine instinct in her heart taught her, how, in such days, she should not play the queen, but the poor sinner for whom Christ died."

Every one will feel what influence such annual seasons of humiliation in sovereigns must have exercised on the formation of their own hearts, and, through them, on the happiness of their subjects. But no one either, I believe, will fail to notice the connection established, by the biographer, between the touching ceremonies of these days and the conduct of this princess, as of many others. Had there been no special commemoration, day by day, and almost hour by hour, of our Saviour's actions and sufferings; had there not been services which especially separated them from all other days, for this solemn occupation; and had they not been such as to bring the feelings of men into harmony with the occasion, certes such instances of royal abasement never would have been witnessed. Nor is this thought and practice far from your own age and place; if, on the evenings of Wednesday and Thursday, you will visit the hospital of the pilgrims, you will see the noblest of Rome, cardinals, bishops, and princes, performing the lowliest works of hospitable charity on the poor strangers who have arrived from afar. Washing and medicating their galled feet, and serving them at table; while dames, of highest degree, are similarly ministering to the poor of their own sex. And here you will see, I promise you, no coldness, or precise formality, as though it were an unwilling duty; but, on the contrary, an alacrity and cheerfulness, a familiarity and kindness, which prove it to be a deed of charity done for Christ's sake, and in example of the humble and suffering state to which He reduced Himself for us. And the relation between this uninterrupted continuation of old charitable hospitality, and the similar action of our Saviour, commemorated in the Church ceremonial, will sufficiently prove the influence which this has in keeping up an exercise so accordant with His precept.

But the effects of these solemnities were more conspicuously useful, inasmuch as they suggested an imitation not only of our Saviour's abasement, but still more of His charity. I will not detain you to quote the authorities of eminent writers, to show how Holy Week was ever distinguished by more abundant alms and works of charitable actions. I will content myself with instances of the influence it had in one rarer and more sovereign exercise of this virtue. There is a well-known anecdote of a young prince, who, being yet in tutelage, besought in vain of his council the liberation of a prisoner; wherefore, going into his room, he, with an amiable peevishness, opened wide the cage of certain singing-birds, which he kept for his pastime, saying, "If I cannot free any other prisoner, no one can prevent my freeing you." With a better spirit, but with an innocence of thought no less amiable, it seemed a rule to expiate the crime of Pilate and the Jews, in unjustly condemning our Lord, by freeing captives on those days from their bonds; and in this manner did it rightly seem to Christian souls that the liberation of man from eternal captivity was most suitably commemorated.

This practice began with the earliest emperors. "Not only we," says St. Chrysostom, in his excellent homily on Good Friday, "not only we honor this great week, but the emperor, likewise, of the entire world. Nor do they do it slightly and formally, but they grant vacation to all magistrates, that, free from cares, they may employ these days in spiritual worship;—let all strife and contention, they say, now cease;—as the goods which the Lord purchased belong to all, let us, His servants, strive to do some good also. Nor by this only do they honor the time, but in another way also; and that no less excellent. Imperial letters are sent forth, enacting that the prisoners' chains be loosed; that, as our Lord, descending into hell, freed all there detained from death, so His servants, imitating as much as may be their Master's clemency, may free men from sensible bands, whom they cannot free from spiritual."

The imperial law encouraged, likewise, private individuals to imitate, as far as possible, this practice of sovereign clemency. For Theodosius prescribed that, while every other judicial act should cease during Holy and Easter Week, an exception should be made in favor of all such acts as were necessary for the emancipation of slaves. St. Gregory of Nyssa mentions this practice of manumission to have been a frequent manner of honoring the season commemorative of our Lord's death and resurrection. At a late period St. Eligius, the friend of Dagobert, says in a homily on Maundy-Thursday: "Malefactors are pardoned, and the prison gates are thrown open throughout the world." Later, the kings of France used to pardon, on Good Friday, one prisoner convicted of some crime otherwise unpardonable; and the clergy of Notre Dame, on Palm Sunday, used to liberate another from the prison of the Petit-

Châtelet. Howard informs us that, "in Navarre, the viceroy and magistrates used to repair twice a year to the prisons, at Christmas and eight days before Easter, and released as many prisoners as they pleased. In 1783, they released thirteen at Easter; and some years before they released all." This shows that the indulgence was not injudiciously granted, but after a proper investigation.

But still more useful was the influence of mercy, in accordance with the lessons of this time, and the example of our Saviour, when it served to temper personal and deadly hatred, such as feudal strife was too apt to engender. When Roger de Breteuil had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment, for conspiracy against William the Conqueror, the historian tells us, that when the people of God were preparing to celebrate the festival of Easter, William sent to him in prison a costly suit with precious furs. And, again, when Duke Robert was besieging closely a castle wherein his enemy, Balalard, had taken refuge, it happened that Balalard's clothes were much worn; whereupon he besought the duke's son to supply him with all that was necessary becomingly to celebrate Easter; so the young nobleman spoke to his father, who ordered him to be provided with new and fair apparel.

When an ancient writer, speaking of the enormous crimes of Gilles Baignart, tells us that he could not have obtained pardon, "not even on Good Friday," methinks such an expression speaks more powerfully than a volume of instances, on the pleading for mercy, which the solemnity of that day was supposed to make. It seems to say, that a man's evil deeds must have been almost fiendish, for pardon to have been refused when asked on that day. What a beautiful commentary on the expression does the history of St. John Gualbert make. His only brother, Hugo, had been slain by one whom the laws could not reach. John was young and passionate, and his father urged him to avenge the murder, and wipe off the disgrace of his family. It was in the eleventh century, when such feuds between noble families were not easily quenched; and he determined to do the work of vengeance to the utmost. It so happened that, on Good Friday, he was riding home to Florence, accompanied by an esquire, when, in a narrow part of the road, he met his adversary alone, so that escape was impossible. John drew his sword, and was about to dispatch his unprepared foe, when he, casting himself on his knees, bade him remember that, on that day, Jesus Christ died for sinners, and besought him to save his life for His dear sake. This plea was irresistible. To have spilt blood on such a day, or to have refused forgiveness, would have been a sacrilege: and the young nobleman not only pardoned his bitter enemy, but, after the example of Christ, who received a kiss from Judas, raised him from the ground and embraced him. And from that happy day began his saintly life.

All this was in conformity with what the Church, in the office of that day, inculcates by example. For, whereas, it is not usual publicly to pray, in her exercises, for those who live not visibly in her pale (although she encourages her children at all times to make instant supplication for them), on that day she separately and distinctly prays for them, not excluding any order, even of such as treat her like an enemy; but striving to make her zeal and love as boundless as her Master's charity. Nothing, surely, but the inculcation of this feeling, or rather the making it the very spirit of that day's solemnity, could have given it such a might in gaining mercy. Hear, again, how wonderfully the precept of receiving the holy communion, at this same season, worked effects of charity. When the good king, Robert of France, was about to celebrate Easter at Compiègne, twelve noblemen were attached of treason, for designing to assassinate him. Having interrogated them, he ordered them to be confined in a house and royally fed; and, on the holiday of the resurrection, strengthened with the holy sacrament. Next day, being tried, they were condemned; but the pious king dismissed them, as his historian says, on account of the benign Jesus.

Surely, when such effects as these were produced, by the observance of a holy season thus set aside for the commemoration of Christ's sacred passion and resurrection, no one will deny that this must be a most wise institution, as a cause and instrument of great public virtue. And the power, which it had and hath, must not be disjoined from the exact forms which it then, as now, observed. For, manifestly, these days would never have received consecration in the minds of men, nor have been thought endowed with a peculiar grace, if nothing had been acted on them that distinguished them from other times. In countries, where no mark seals them with a blessed application, they slip over like other days. Good Friday alone detains, for a brief hour, the attention of men to the recital of our Redeemer's dolorous passion; but how faint must be the impression thus produced, compared with that of a sorrowful ceremonial, which, step by step, leads you through the history of this painful event, pausing, as if to look upon each distinct act of graciousness, and to commemorate each expression of love, and to study every lesson of virtue! And, indeed, how powerful this influence was, the effects I have described must show.

Nor must it be thought for a moment, that they resulted rather from custom than from feeling; as though kings and princes were not likely to assist with much earnestness at these ceremonies, but rather left them to be performed by priests in their churches or chantries. On the contrary, they would have greatly shocked their subjects had they neglected due and respectful attention to these ecclesiastical offices. When the pious emperor, Henry II., was returning from Rome, where he had been crowned, he stayed his journey at Pavia, that he might celebrate Easter; and so our own and foreign chronicles often record the place where the holydays were passed. Rymer has preserved a writ of Edward III., commanding the ornaments of his chapel to be sent to Calais, where he meant to keep the festival. Abbot Suger has given us a minute account of the magnificent way in which the kings of France used to observe the sacred time in the Roman style, as he expresses it. On Wednesday, the king proceeded to St. Denis, met by a solemn procession. There he spent Thursday (on which the ceremonies were performed with great magnificence), and all Friday. The night of Easter eve he passed in church; and, after privately communicating in the morning, went in splendid state to celebrate the Easter festivity.

It may be, perhaps, objected, that the impression thus made by a few days of devotion and recollection, must have been very transient, and can have produced no permanent effects. This, however, was far from being the case. For the Church, with a holy ingenuity, was able to prolong the sacred character of these days throughout the year; and to make the lessons we have seen taught by them enduring and continued. Every one, I presume, is aware that Sunday is but a weekly repetition, through the year, of Easter day; for the Apostles transferred the sabbatical rest from the last to the first day of the week to commemorate our Lord's resurrection. Now, a similar spirit consecrated, from the beginning of the Church, the sixth day of every week as a day of humiliation, in continued remembrance of the day whereon He was crucified.

From the beginning, Friday was kept as a fast, and that of so strict observance, that the blessed martyr, Fructuosus, bishop of Tarracona, in Spain, when led to execution, in 259, though standing much in need of refreshment, refused to drink, it being Friday, and about ten of the clock. The motives for this fast, as well as of that on Saturdays, the remains of which yet exist in the observance of these two days as days of abstinence, is clearly stated to be what I have described it, by Pope Innocent I., about the year 402. For, writing to Decentius, he says: "On Friday we fast on account of our Lord's passion. Saturday ought not to be passed over, because it is included between the sorrow and the joy of that season. This form of fasting must be observed every week, because the commemoration of that day is ever to be observed." Julius Pollux, in his chronicle, says of Constantine: "He ordered Friday and Sunday to be honored; that on account of the Cross (or crucifixion) of Christ, and this for His resurrection."

In after ages, this custom was rigidly observed, as a learned and pious living author has proved by examples. In an old French poem upon the Order of Chivalry, Hue de Tabarie informs Saladin of the four things which a true knight should observe; one is abstinence or temperance. He then says: "And to tell you the truth, he should, on every Friday, fast, in holy remembrance, that, on that day, Jesus Christ, with a lance, for our redemption was pierced; throughout his life, on that day, he must fast for our Lord." It is recorded, in old memoirs of the Mareschal de Boucicaut, that he held Friday in great reverence, would eat nothing on it which had possessed life, and dressed in black to commemorate our Saviour's passion. And hence, on the other hand, the people of his time held it for one of Robert le Diable's worst characteristics, that he neglected that day's fast.

This powerful association of one day in the week, with the lessons of meekness and forgiveness which we have seen its prototype inculcates, and this one day observed with humble devotion, in honor of man's redemption, must have kept alive a truly Christian spirit, or at least have acted as a check, salutary and powerful, upon the course, otherwise unrestrained, of passion. The feeling which inspired this dedication is not yet extinct. Here, in particular, all public amusements are prohibited on the Friday, as inconsistent with the mystery which it still commemorates. In England, it has lingered in the form of a popular superstition, deeply rooted and widely extended, that no new undertaking should be commenced on that day.

But this perpetuation, throughout the year, of the feelings which the last days of Holy Week are intended to inspire, is much better and more effectually to be acknowledged in another institution of past ages. The feudal system, however beautiful in many of its principles, was a constant seed-bed of animosities and wars. Each petty chief arrogated to himself the rights of sovereignty; and all those passions which disturb great monarchs, revenge, ambition, jealousy, and restlessness, were multiplied in innumerable smaller spheres, which occasioned more real suffering to those exposed to their influence than the commotions of larger governments could have caused. The Church, the only authority which, unarmed, could throw itself between two foes, and act as a mediating power, essayed in every possible way to bring a love of peace home to men's hearts. But they were men ever cased in steel, on whom lessons of general principles had but little power. Unable to cut up the evil by the roots, it turned its care to the rendering it less hurtful, and devised expedients for lessening the horrors and abridging the calamities of feudal war. For this purpose, it seized upon those religious feelings which I have already shown to have resulted from the celebration of Christ's passion during Holy Week; and the success was so marked, that the pious age in which the experiment was made, hesitated not to attribute it to the interposition of Heaven.

About the middle of the eleventh century, as a contemporary writer informs us, a covenant, founded upon the love, as well as the fear, of God, was established in Aquitaine, and thence gradually spread over all France. It was of this tenor: that, from the vespers of Wednesday until Monday at daybreak, no one shall presume to take aught from any man by violence, or to avenge himself of his adversary, or to come down upon a surety for his engagements. Whosoever should infringe this public decree must either compound for his life, or, being excommunicate, be banished the country. In this also did all agree, that this compact should bear the name of the "Truce of God." There could be no doubt regarding the principle of this important regulation, if its original founders had left us in the dark. The time pronounced sacred, and during which war could not be carried on, is precisely that which the Church occupies in Holy Week in the celebration of Christ's passion. That the ground of this consecration was this passion has been clearly recorded; but it is plain, that the limits thus assigned were not drawn from the actual time during which our Saviour suffered, seeing that He began His pains on Olivet only in the evening of Thursday, but rather from the ecclesiastical period of celebration, which is from the Wednesday afternoon at Tenebræ till Monday following. Not aware of this, several modern authors have fallen into the mistake of shortening by one day this Truce of God, asserting it to have begun on Thursday evening.

See, then, how the Church extended to the whole year the virtuous effects produced, for the welfare of men, by the offices of Holy Week, and turned the reverence which they excited to good and durable account in promoting public happiness. What a beneficial influence too! For all men could now reckon, in each week, upon four days' security and peace. They could travel abroad, or attend to their domestic affairs, without danger of molestation, shielded by the religious sanction of this sacred convention. The ravages of war were restrained to three days; there was leisure for passion to cool, and for the mind to sicken at a languishing warfare, and long for home.

Nor must it be thought that this law remained a dead letter. The author to whom I have referred proceeds to say, that many who refused to observe it were soon punished either by Divine judgments, or by the sword of man. "And this," he adds, "most justly; for as Sunday is considered venerable on account of our Lord's resurrection, so ought Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, through reverence of His Last Supper and Passion, to be kept free of all wicked actions." Then he proceeds to detail one or two striking instances, as they were considered, of Divine vengeance upon transgressors. William the Conqueror acceded to this holy truce, approved by a council of his bishops and barons held at Lillebonne, in 1080. Count Raymond published it at Barcelona, and successive popes, as Urban II., in the celebrated synod of Clermont, Paschal II., in that of Rome, and particularly Innocent II. and Alexander III., in the first and second Lateran councils, sanctioned and enforced it.

This is a strong and incontrovertible example of the happy influence which the celebration of these coming solemnities has exerted upon the general happiness, and the share they have had in humanizing men, and rendering their actions conformable to the feelings and precepts of the gospel. For let me remark to you, that in none of the examples I have brought can it be said, that the vulgar solution of such phenomena will hold good ; that a superstitious awe, or fanatical reverence of outward forms, was the active cause. In not one case will it be possible to show that the conduct has been devoid of a feeling which all must pronounce virtuous and holy ; or rather that it has not sprung, as a natural result, from the inward sentiment which these sacred observances had inspired. Nay, I have passed over what, perhaps, would have been a proof, stronger than any other, of their influence, because I feared that opinion concerning its value might be divided, or the motives of many, among those who gave it, might be more easily suspected. I allude to the crusades, those gigantic quests of ancient chivalry, when knighthood, of its own nature a lover of solitary adventure and individual glory, became, so to speak, gregarious, and poured its blood in streams to regain the sepulchre of Christ. Could such a spirit of religious enterprise have anywhere existed, if the thoughts of men had not been taught to solemnize His passion, by the contemplation of scenes which led them yearly in spirit to Jerusalem, and inflamed their minds with warm devotion toward the place of their redemption ? Would pilgrims have flocked to Palestine, in spite of paynim oppression and stripes, and even of death, if Passion-tide, in their own country, had ever passed over, like any other week, without offices, without mourning, without deep expressions of sympathy for the sufferings of Christ ? Was it not the thought, how much more feeling will all these functions be, upon the very spot whereon what they commemorate occurred, that necessarily formed the first link in the reasoning which led them from their homes ? Could they have been induced to undertake so long, so wearisome, and so perilous a journey, with no other prospect, during the season commemorative of the passion, than a solitary every-day service on one morning of the week ? And we know, that to secure these pious palmers from the vexatious tyranny of the infidels, was one of the great motives of these expeditions.

But on this subject I do not wish to dwell. Without entering on such contested ground, I flatter myself that enough has been said to show what an important influence, upon public virtue, the solemn yearly celebration of Christ's passion, through its affecting ceremonial, has exerted. It has brought men, even unwillingly, to the observance of propriety; it has taught kings humility and charity; it has softened the harshness of feudal enmities, and produced meekness in forgiving wrongs. But we have also seen Holy Week become, in some sort, the very heart of the entire year (as its mystery is of Christianity), sending forth a living stream of holy and solemn feeling, which circulated through the whole twelve months, beating powerfully at short intervals through its frame, and renewing at each stroke the healthy and quickening action of its first impulse.

The effects thus produced upon society must have depended, in a great measure, upon the operation which this solemnization had in each individual; and we cannot doubt that these were, as they now are, excellently beneficial. For, if the death of Christ be the sinner's only refuge, and the just man's only hope, according as the Catholic Church hath ever taught, it cannot be without good and wholesome effects, to turn the mind of each, for a certain space, entirely toward this subject, excluding, as much as possible, at the same time, all other distracting thoughts. To understand, however, the power of this most wise disposition, it is fair to consider this season with all its attendant circumstances.

And, first, we should not forget that Holy Week appears not suddenly in the midst of the year, to be entered upon abruptly, and without preparation. It has a solemn vestibule, in the previous humiliation of Lent, which, by fasting and retirement from the usual dissipations of the remaining year, brings the mind to a proper tone for feeling what is to come. This is like a solitude round a temple, such as girded the Egyptian Oasis; and prevents the intrusion of thoughts and impressions too fresh from the world and its vanities. As the more important moment of initiation approaches, the gloom becomes more dense, and during Passion Week, in which now we are, we feel ourselves surrounded by sad preparations, inasmuch as every part of our liturgy speaks of Christ's passion, and the outward signs of mourning have already appeared in our churches. During this Lenten season there are daily sermons in the principal churches, wherein eloquent men unfold all the truths of religion with unction and zeal. In the week just passed, you may have noticed how, during certain hours of the afternoons, every place of ordinary refreshment was empty and closed. But instead of them the churches were all open and full; for, during those days, other learned priests, in familiar discourse, expounded to the people the duty of returning to God by repentance through the sacrament of penance. They taught them, in the strongest terms, the necessity of changing their lives, and effectually turning from sin; and then dwelt on the purity of heart and burning love, with which at Easter they should comply with the Church's precept of receiving the sacred communion. These were the themes prescribed to them during the week just elapsed.

The work of preparation has not ended here. For almost every order of men there have been opened courses of spiritual exercises or retreats, that is, perfect retirement, from all other occupation, to prayer and pious reflection. The noblemen have held theirs in the chapel at the Gesù; ladies at the oratory of the Caravita; and the numerous houses set aside for this purpose have been crowded; and not a few, whom infirmity prevents from joining them, have observed these pious practices at home. Saturday evening, the university, and every establishment of education, commences a similar course of retirements and devotions, which will close on Wednesday morning. During these days, the time is divided between hearing the word of God, chiefly in regard to its most saving truths, and meditating thereon in solitude.

It is thus prepared, that the Catholic approaches, or is desired to approach, the closing days of the Holy Week, and to assist at those beautiful services, which lead us through the history of Our Dear Redeemer's passion. The conscience has been purged from sin, and the pledge of salvation probably received, the ordinary distinctions of life have been gradually excluded, and the temper of the soul brought into harmony with the feeling they inspire. They are not intended, therefore, to produce a sudden and magical effect, but only to come upon the soul with a natural sympathetic power, resulting as much from the disposition of our minds as from their own intrinsic worth.

This view of the last days, or rather of the entire of Holy Week, as a time of individual sanctification, is by no means peculiar to Rome, or to this age. It is inculcated in every Catholic country. In Paris, there are always such public exercises preparatory to it; and in Spain, as well as every part of Italy, the same course is pursued. In former times it was so in our own country. In the book of ecclesiastical laws, written originally by Theodulph, bishop of Orleans, in the eighth century, and adopted in England, in 994, we find it enacted, that all the faithful partake of the holy communion every Sunday in Lent, and on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week, and Easter Sunday; and likewise, that all the days of Easter Week be kept with equal devotion.

That the observance of this time, in such a manner, must be to many most blessed, no one will, I think, deny. For opportunities are thus certainly given, on occasion of it, to ponder well upon the great duties of the Christian state, and the means of accomplishing them; and all this, most surely, would not have been devised nor executed but for the veneration with which the celebration of our Saviour's death is regarded, and the holiness and purity with which it seems to us that so sacred a commemoration and so awful a representation should be attended.

And if these can indirectly perform so much, through the preparation they require, what shall we say of themselves? Combining, in justest proportions, all that can reach the soul,—beauty, solemnity, dignity, and pathos, performed under circumstances calculated to soothe the feelings of the sternest mind, and dedicated to the most Christian of all possible objects, must they not have a devotional influence on all that court it with a pious disposition? Go to the Sixtine chapel, with the impression that you are not about to witness a ceremony, but to assist at an annual remembrance of His death, whom you should love,—a remembrance, too, wherein you have a part, as you had in the reality—in which your compassion, not your curiosity, your heart and not your captiousness, ought to be engaged; unlock all the nerves of the soul, that emotion may enter in through every sense; follow the words which are recited, join in the prayers that are poured forth, listen to the pathetic strains in which the Church utters her wail, drinking in their feeling rather than admiring their art,—and I will promise you, that, when the evening shade has closed over the last cadences of the plaintive music, you will arise and go home, as you would from the house of mourning, "a sadder but a better man."

And is not this truly the house of mourning into which you will enter? Is it not to the perpetual anniversary of One most dear to us that we are summoned? When our nearest of kin depart, we put on mourning weeds, and we sorrow for a time. And when the year comes round, so long as the dark suit upon our bodies reminds us, we recall the day. The Church, unfailing in her ordinances as in her existence, willeth not that we so quickly forget. She sets no limits to the religious remembrance of the departed, in our supplications to God; she perpetuates their memory, if they live among the saints, to the end of time. How, then, can she ever forget that awful stroke which robbed earth of its glory, and brought all nature into sorrow? Surely, to allow its anniversary to pass over, without a celebration worthy of the event, would be an unnatural indifference in her, not even to be suspected.

Who knoweth not, how closely allied are the tender emotions of piety unto sorrow? Who hath not felt how moments of distress are moments of fervor for the soul that seeketh God? I believe, that hardly a religion, true or false, will be found, without a festival of sorrow wherein men bewail the past loss of some worshipped or honored being. The ancient mysteries of Egypt had certainly such; and the maidens of Judah annually retired into the hills to mourn over the virginity of Jephtha's daughter. The Persians annually celebrate their Aaschoor, or mourning feast for Hussein's death. The squares are covered with black, and stages are erected on which the Mullahs relate the sorrowful story, while the audience are in tears. For ten days, processions, alms-deeds, and scenes of extravagant sorrow, occupy the city, and ceremonies are performed which graphically and dramatically represent the fate of the young Caliph. These are all various expressions of the same want, felt in every religion, of dedicating the tenderer emotions to the service of God, as those which best can harmonize with affectionate devotion. And shall the Christian worship alone, which presents a just, a moving, a sublime occasion of sorrow, in the death of an incarnate God for our sin, dry up, by stern decree, the fountain of such pure emotion, or afford no room for outwardly exercising such true and holy feelings?

Nay, rather, was she not bound to scoop out a channel through which they might flow undisturbed by the troubled waters of worldly solicitude? Could we have expected from her less, than that she should have digged a cistern, deep and wide, for such pure sentiments, and thence sluiced it off, as we have seen her do, over the barrenness of the remaining seasons, to refresh them with a living stream?

It is difficult to say from what principle of self-knowledge the notion sprang in modern religions that outward forms destroy or disturb the inward spirit. It should seem, that the very knowledge of man's twofold constitution would expose the idea to scorn. It must be that daily experience proves, how soon and how easily men forget their inward duty, unless outwardly reminded, through the senses, of its obligation. Wherefore it should have been decided in later times, that the ear alone is the channel of admonition and encouragement, and that the eye,—that noblest and quickest of senses, which seizes by impulse what the other receives by succession,—is not worthily to be employed for religion, I own the reason is hidden from me. One hand fashioned both; and why should not both be rendered back in homage to Him? If the splendor of religious ceremony may bewitch, and fix the eye upon the instrument instead of the object, as surely may the orator's skill, or the ornaments of his speech.

And applying these ideas to our present subject; if the meditation upon Christ's Passion be the worthiest employment of any true Christian, what shall prevent our endeavoring to engage every good feeling, and every channel of inward communication, in assisting us to the exercise? Or, who shall fear that we shall thereby fail? When the unfortunate Mary Stuart was upon the scaffold, having prayed for her implacable persecutor, Elizabeth, she held up the crucifix which she bore, exclaiming, "As Thy arms, O God, were stretched out upon the Cross, so receive me into the arms of Thy mercy, and forgive me my sins." Whereupon the Earl of Kent unfeelingly said: "Madam, you had better leave such popish trumperies, and bear Him in your heart." Now, note her meek and just reply: "I cannot hold in my hand the representation of His sufferings, but I must, at the same time, bear Him in my heart." Who of those two spake here the language of nature? Whom would any one wish most to resemble in sentiment,—the fanatic who presided, or the humble queen who suffered at the execution? Sir Thomas Brown is not ashamed to own, that the sight of a Catholic procession has sometimes moved him to tears. Who will say that these were not salutary?

But the best proof that the attention paid to the commemoration of Christ's Passion, during the ensuing days, does not rest outside the heart, but penetrates to its very core, saturating it with a rich and lasting unction of true devotion, would be drawn from the writings of our Catholic authors. It would be impossible even to enumerate the works which we possess upon the Passion, filled with a fervor of eloquence, a depth of feeling, and a penetrating power, which no other writings possess. Whoever can read St. Bernard's sermons on Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday, and not feel the tears in his eyes, will not easily be moved by words; and he must be absolutely without a heart who should pronounce that the mysteries of those days produced only a sensible and ineffectual devotion.

But there is another writer upon this inexhaustible subject, who more than any other will justify all that I have said; and, moreover, prove the influence which these festivals of the Passion may exercise upon the habitual feelings of a Christian. I speak of the exquisite meditations of St. Bonaventure upon the life of Christ, a work in which it is difficult what most to admire, the richness of imagination, surpassed by no poet, or the tenderness of sentiment, or the variety of adaptation. After having led us through the affecting incidents of our Saviour's infancy and life, and brought us to the last moving scenes, his steps become slower. from the variety of his beautiful but melancholy fancies; he now proceeds, not from year to year, or from month to month, or from day to day, but each hour has its meditations, and every act of the last tragedy affords him matter for pathetic imagination. But when, at the conclusion, he comes to propose to us the method of practicing his holy contemplations, he so distributes them, that from Monday to Wednesday shall embrace the whole of our Saviour's life; but from Thursday to Sunday inclusive, each day shall be entirely taken up with that mystery which the Church in Holy Week has allotted to it. In this manner did he, with many others, extend throughout the whole year the solemn commemorations of Holy Week, for the promotion of individual devotion and sanctification, even as the Church had done for the public welfare.

These are but a few examples. What shall I say of the tender and continual devotion of so many holy persons to the Passion of Christ? Of St. John of the Cross? Of the blessed Teresa, who, from childhood, never slept till she had meditated on it? Above all, of that sublime saint, the seraphic Francis, "The Troubadour of love," as Görres has justly called him, whose poems, the earliest ascertainable in the Italian language, breathe nothing but a devotion toward Christ and Him crucified, which proves how deeply he bore Him in his heart. But this topic would lead me far astray. Before, however, taking leave of it, I would remark, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh and *that* not only in individuals, but in their communities. It is this St Bernard observes of his constant repetition of his Saviour's name, "It is in my heart," he says, "and thence it leaps to my mouth." It is difficult to imagine a religion whose inward and vital principles are not expressed in its public offices, and recorded, as on monuments, in its religious enactments: and yet it would not be impossible to find an example of such a phenomenon. When the separation of religion took place in England, one of the great charges against the Church was, that it had abandoned Christ and the sole trust in His blood, and had rather sought favor from saints and angels; and these things were called abominations and foul corruption. Now, if posterity had to judge on this matter, how astonished would it be to read the Act of 5 and 6 Edward VI., for the regulating of feasts, and find every saint's day enjoined to be kept holy, which the Catholics now keep, and many more; but every day omitted which in the leastwise alludes to the death and Passion of our Lord! But amongst us no such inconsistency will be discovered. We profess to honor Christ and His blessed Passion by inward and devout affection, and we carefully lay aside days and circumstances in which to testify our feelings.

It is time, however, that I bring you to some conclusion. I have proposed to you separate views of the functions and offices of Holy Week, not as distinct and divisible prospects, whereof each may choose one for himself, but rather as an aggregate of harmonizing sentiments, all uniting for the loftiest and holiest of purposes. The Christian feeling that Christ is to be unboundedly honored by the best of such gifts as He hath bestowed upon man, the deeper sentiment, that in no state doth He more deserve our honor and affection than when abased and afflicted for our sakes; the religious enthusiasm which such a contemplation of Him must excite; these have guided the Church, from age to age, in the formation of a ceremonial the most beautiful and poetical; these have inspired the musician with his plaintive strains; these have directed the artist's mind and hand to conceive with grandeur and adorn with solemnity a theatre befitting so holy, so great a celebration. Thus considered, the subject of these discourses, disjointed as it may have appeared, receives an unity; for we have been only considering the various emanations of one and the same ruling influence. Who would wish that these things were not so? Who would hail with delight a reforming power that should remodel all that he should witness upon the type of later institutions, and work those changes which such an alteration would require? Away with the towering canopy of St. Peter's basilica, with its angels and cross; extinguish forever the lights that have there burned for ages; fill up the venerable confession where the apostles' bones have rested, and hew down the marble altar; then throw a screen from side to side, to be locked up save for one short hour; place an ordinary table at the upper end, exalt the organ beneath the dome, and fill up the intermediate space with pews and stalls. Banish Palestrina's magnificent song to the concert-room; shut up the Sixtine for a museum, to be seen by permission; abolish the entire service, and make the days which solemnize the anniversary of Christ's torments and death undistinguishable from those which precede and follow them. What would religion have gained? Would a purer love for Him have been thus shown to have descended among men? Would it seem to you that thus He was more truly honored? Could you desire for a moment to see such changes?

If any one's heart here answer, Yes! I entreat, I implore him not to attend the offices of the Holy Week. He certainly will not enjoy them; he certainly will suffer pain, and moreover find himself distracted by them in that more spiritual and peculiar way in which *he* intends to commemorate his Saviour's Passion. He will be doing even worse, for he will necessarily inspire by his conduct the feelings of his neighbors. But whoever shall go with a mind duly prepared, and with a heart unprejudiced, and with a soul alive to religious impressions, will not surely return disappointed.

With these remarks I take my leave, conscious that I have but glanced over the surface of my undertaking, and that I have but done little justice to its beauties. To do this would require a treatise rather than a few short essays. I shall be satisfied, however, if I have fulfilled the moderate promise which I made at the outset, of presenting such general views as might be preparatory to appreciating the beauties, and imbibing the feeling, of these simple yet magnificent ceremonials.

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

Cardinal John Henry Newman, D.D., was born in London, in 1801. In the year 1824 he was ordained clergyman of the English Church. In 1845 he was admitted to the Catholic Church, and shortly afterward ordained to the priesthood, in Rome. In 1848 he returned to England, and established a branch of the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, of which he became Superior, subsequently. In the year 1852 he was appointed rector of the Catholic University, established in Dublin, and in 1879 created Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. His Eminence died in 1890.

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

THE SALVATION OF THE HEARER THE MOTIVE OF THE PREACHER.

WHEN a body of men come into a neighborhood to them unknown, as we are doing, my brethren, strangers to strangers, and there set themselves down, and raise an altar, and open a school, and invite, or even exhort all men to attend them, it is natural that they who see them, and are drawn to think about them, should ask the question, What brings them hither? Who bids them come? What do they want? What do they preach? What is their warrant? What do they promise?—You have a right, my brethren, to ask the question.

Many, however, will not stop to ask it, as thinking they can answer it without difficulty for themselves. Many there are who would promptly and confidently answer it, according to their own habitual view of things, on their own principles, the principles of the world. The views, the principles, the aims of the world are very definite, are everywhere acknowledged, and are incessantly acted on. They supply an explanation of the conduct of individuals, whoever they be, ready at hand, and so sure to be true in the common run of cases, as to be probable and plausible in any case in particular. When we would account for effects which we see, we of course refer them to causes which we know of. To fancy causes of which we know nothing, is not to account for them at all. The world then naturally and necessarily judges of others by itself. Those who live the life of the world, and act from motives of the world, and live and act with those who do the like, as a matter of course ascribe the actions of others, however different they may be from their own, to one or other of the motives which weigh with themselves; for some motive or other they must assign, and they can imagine none but those of which they have experience.

We know how the world goes on, especially in this country; it is a laborious, energetic, indefatigable world. It takes up objects enthusiastically, and vigorously carries them through. Look into the world, as its course is faithfully traced day by day in those publications which are devoted to its service, and you will see at once the ends which stimulate it, and the views which govern it. You will read of great and persevering exertions, made for some temporal end, good or bad, but still temporal.

Some temporal end it is, even if it be not a selfish one;—generally, indeed, it is such as name, influence, power, wealth, station; sometimes it is the relief of the ills of human life or society, of ignorance, sickness, poverty, or vice—still some temporal end it is, which is the exciting and animating principle of those exertions. And so pleasant is the excitement which those temporal objects create, that it is often its own reward; insomuch that, forgetting the end for which they toil, men find a satisfaction in the toil itself, and are sufficiently repaid for their trouble *by* their trouble,—by the struggle for success, and the rivalry of party, and the trial of their skill, and the demand upon their resources, by the vicissitudes and hazards, and ever new emergencies, and varying requisitions of the contest which they carry on, though that contest never comes to an end.

Such is the way of the world; and therefore, I say, it is not unnatural, that, when it sees any persons whatever anywhere begin to work with energy, and attempt to get others about them, and act in outward appearance like itself, though in a different direction and with a religious profession, it should unhesitatingly impute to them the motives which influence, or would influence its own children. Often by way of blame, but sometimes not as blaming, but as merely stating a plain fact, which it thinks undeniable, it takes for granted that they are ambitious, or restless, or eager for distinction, or fond of power. It knows no better; and it is vexed and annoyed if, as time goes on, one thing or another is seen in the conduct of those whom it criticises, which is inconsistent with the assumption on which, in the first instance, it so summarily settled their position and anticipated their course. It took a general view of them, looked them through, as it thought, and from some one action of theirs which came to its knowledge, assigned to them unhesitatingly some particular motive as their habitual actuating principle; but presently it finds it is obliged to shift its ground, to take up some new hypothesis, and explain to itself their character and their conduct over again. O, my dear brethren, the world cannot help doing so, because it knows us not; it ever will be impatient with us for not being of the world, because it is the world; it is necessarily blind to the one strong motive which has influence with us, and, tired out at length with hunting through its catalogues and note-books for a description of us, it sits down in disgust, after its many conjectures, and flings us aside as inexplicable, or hates us as if mysterious and designing.

My brethren, we *have* secret views—secret, that is from men of this world; secret from politicians, secret from the slaves of mammon, secret from all ambitious, covetous, selfish, and voluptuous men. For religion itself, like its Divine Author and Teacher, is, as I have said, a hidden thing from them; and not knowing it, they cannot use it as a key to interpret the conduct of those who are influenced by it. They do not know the ideas and motives which religion sets before that mind which it has made its own. They do not enter into them, or realize them, even when they are told them; and they do not believe that a man can be influenced by them, even when he professes them. They cannot put themselves into the position of a man simply striving, in what he does, to please God. They are so narrow-minded, such is the meanness of their intellectual make, that, when a Catholic makes profession of this or that doctrine of the Church,—sin, judgment, heaven and hell, the blood of Christ, the power of Saints, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, or the real presence in the Eucharist,—and says that these are the objects which inspire his thoughts and direct his actions through the day, they cannot take in that he is in earnest; for they think, forsooth, that these points ought to be his very difficulties, and are at most nothing more than trials to his faith, and that he gets over them by putting force on his reason, and thinks of them as little as he can; and they do not dream that truths such as these have a hold upon his heart, and exert an influence on his life. No wonder, then, that the sensual, and worldly-minded, and the unbelieving, are suspicious of one whom they cannot comprehend, and are so intricate and circuitous in their imputations, when they cannot bring themselves to accept an explanation which is straight before them. So it has been from the beginning; the Jews preferred to ascribe the conduct of our Lord and His forerunner to any motive but that of a desire to fulfil the will of God. To the Jews they were, as He says, "like children sitting in the market-place, which cry to their companions, saying, We have piped to you, and you have not danced; we have lamented to you, and you have not mourned." And then He goes on to account for it: "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father: for so hath it been pleasing to Thy sight."

Let the world have its way, let it say what it will about us, my brethren; but that does not hinder our saying what we think, and what the eternal God thinks and says, about the world. We have as good a right to have our own judgment about the world, as the world to have its judgment about us; and we mean to exercise that right; for, while we know well it judges us amiss, we have God's testimony that we judge it truly. While, then, it is eager in ascribing our earnestness to one or other of its own motives, listen to me, while I show you, as it is not difficult to do, that it is our very fear and hatred of those motives, and our compassion for the souls possessed by them, which makes us so busy and so troublesome, which prompts us to settle down in a district, so destitute of outward recommendations, but so overrun with religious error and so populous in souls.

O my brethren, little does the world, engrossed, as it is, with things of time and sense, little does it trouble itself about souls, about the state of souls in God's sight, about their past history, and about their prospects for the future. The world forms its views of things for itself, and in its own way, and lives in them. It never stops to consider whether they are sound and true; nor does it come into its thought to seek for any external standard, or channel of information, by which their truth can be ascertained. It is content to take things for granted according to their first appearance; it does not stop to think of God; it lives for the day, and (in a perverse sense) "is not solicitous for the morrow." What it sees, tastes, handles, is enough for it; this is the limit of its knowledge and of its aspirations; what tells, what works well, is alone respectable; efficiency is the measure of duty, and power is the rule of right, and success is the test of truth. It believes what it experiences, it disbelieves what it cannot demonstrate. And, in consequence, it teaches that a man has not much to do to be saved; that either he has committed no great sins, or that he will, as a matter of course, be pardoned for committing them; that he may securely trust in God's mercy for his prospects in eternity; and that he ought to discard all self-reproach, or deprecation, or penance, all mortification and self-discipline, as affronting or derogatory to that mercy. This is what the world teaches, by its many sects and philosophies, about our condition in this life, this and the like; but what, on the other hand, does the Catholic Church teach concerning it?

She teaches that man was originally made in God's image, was God's adopted son, was the heir of eternal glory, and, in foretaste of eternity, was partaker here on earth of great gifts and manifold graces; and she teaches that now he is a fallen being. He is under the curse of original sin; he is deprived of the grace of God; he is a child of wrath; he cannot attain to heaven, and he is in peril of sinking into hell. I do not mean he is fated to perdition by some necessary law; he cannot perish without his own real will and deed; and God gives him, even in his natural state, a multitude of inspirations and helps to lead him on to faith and obedience. There is no one born of Adam but might be saved, as far as divine assistances are concerned; yet, looking at the power of temptation, the force of the passions, the strength of self-love and self-will, the sovereignty of pride and sloth, in every one of his children, who will be bold enough to assert of any particular soul, that it will be able to maintain itself in obedience, without an abundance, a profusion of grace, not to be expected, as bearing no proportion, I do not say simply to the claims (for they are none), but to the bare needs of human nature?

We may securely prophesy of every man born into the world, that, if he comes to years of understanding, he will, in spite of God's general assistances, fall into mortal sin and lose his soul. It is no light, no ordinary succor, by which man is taken out of his own hands and defended against himself. He requires an extraordinary remedy. Now what a thought is this! what a light does it cast upon man's present state! how different from the view which the world takes of it; how piercing, how overpowering in its influence on the hearts that admit it.

Contemplate, my brethren, more steadily the history of a soul born into the world, and educated according to its principles, and the idea, which I am putting before you, will grow on you. The poor infant passes through his two, or three, or five years of innocence, blessed in that he cannot yet sin; but at length (O woeful day!) he begins to realize the distinction between right and wrong. Alas! sooner or later, for the age varies, but sooner or later the awful day has come; he has the power, the great, the dreadful, the awful power of discerning and pronouncing a thing to be wrong, and yet doing it. He has a distinct view that he shall grievously offend his Maker and his Judge by doing this or that; and while he is really able to keep from it, he is at liberty to choose it, and to commit it. He has the dreadful power of committing a mortal sin. Young as he is, he has as true an apprehension of that sin, and can give as real a consent, as did the evil spirit, when he fell. The day is come, and who shall say whether it will have closed, whether it will have run out many hours, before he will have exercised that power, and have perpetrated, in fact, what he ought not to do, what he need not do, what he can do? Who is there whom we ever knew, of whom we can assert that, had he remained in a state of nature, he would have used the powers given him,—that if he be in a state of nature, he has used the powers given him,—in such a way as to escape the guilt and penalty of offending Almighty God? No, my brethren, a large town like this is a fearful sight. We walk the streets, and what numbers are there of those who meet us who have never been baptized at all! And the remainder, what is it made up of, but for the most part of those who, though baptized, have sinned against the grace given them, and even from early youth have thrown themselves out of that fold in which alone is salvation! Reason and sin have gone together from the first. Poor child, he looks the same to his parents! They do not know what has been going on in him; or perhaps did they know it, they would think very little of it, for they are in a state of mortal sin as well as he. They too, long before they knew each other, had sinned, and mortally too, and were never reconciled to God; thus they lived for years, unmindful of their state. At length they married; it was a day of joy to them, but not to the Angels; they might be in high life or in low estate, they might be prosperous or not in their temporal course, but their union was not blessed by God. They gave birth to a child; he was not condemned to hell on his birth, but he had the omens of evil upon him, it seemed that he would go the way of all flesh; and now the time is come; the presage is justified; and he willingly departs from God. At length the forbidden fruit has been eaten; sin has been devoured with a pleased appetite; the gates of hell have yawned upon him, silently and without his knowing it; he has no eyes to see its flames, but its inhabitants are gazing upon him; his place in it is fixed beyond dispute;—unless his Maker interfere in some extraordinary way, he is doomed.

Yet his intellect does not stay its growth, because he is the slave of sin. It opens; time passes; he learns perhaps various things; he may have good abilities, and be taught to cultivate them. He may have engaging manners; anyhow he is light-hearted and merry, as boys are. He is gradually educated for the world; he forms his own judgments; chooses his principles, and is moulded to a certain character. That character may be more, or it may be less amiable; it may have much or little of natural virtue: it matters not—the mischief is within; it is done, and it spreads. The devil is unloosed and abroad in him. For a while he used some sort of prayers, but he has left them off; they were but a form, and he had no heart for them; why should he continue them? and what was the use of them? and what the obligation? So he has reasoned; and he has acted upon his reasoning, and ceased to pray. Perhaps this was his first sin, that original mortal sin, which threw him out of grace—a disbelief in the power of prayer. As a child, he refused to pray, and argued that he was too old to pray, and that his parents did not pray. He gave prayer up, and in came the devil, and took possession of him, and made himself at home, and revelled in his heart.

Poor child! Every day adds fresh and fresh mortal sins to his account; the pleadings of grace have less and less effect upon him; he breathes the breath of evil, and day by day becomes more fatally corrupted. He has cast off the thought of God, and set up self in His place. He has rejected the traditions of religion which float about him, and has chosen instead the more congenial traditions of the world, to be the guide of his life. He is confident in his own views, and does not suspect that evil is before him, and in his path. He learns to scoff at serious men and serious things, catches at any story circulated against them, and speaks positively when he has no means of judging or knowing. The less he believes of revealed doctrine, the wiser he thinks himself to be. Or, if his natural temper keeps him from becoming hard-hearted, still from easiness and from imitation he joins in mockery of holy persons and holy things, as far as they come across him. He is sharp and ready, and humorous, and employs these talents in the cause of Satan. He has a secret antipathy to religious truths and religious doings, a disgust which he is scarcely aware of, and could not explain, if he were. So was it with Cain, the eldest born of Adam, who went on to murder his brother, because his works were just. So was it with those poor boys at Bethel who mocked the great prophet Eliseus, crying out, Go up, thou bald-head! Anything serves the purpose of a scoff and taunt to the natural man, when irritated by the sight of religion.

O my brethren, I might go on to mention those other more loathsome and more hidden wickednesses which germinate and propagate within him, as time proceeds, and life opens on him. Alas! who shall sound the depths of that evil whose wages is death? O what a dreadful sight to look on, is this fallen world, specious and fair outside, plausible in its professions, ashamed of its own sins and hiding them, yet a mass of corruption under the surface! Ashamed of its sins, yet not confessing to itself that they are sins, but defending them if conscience upbraids, and perhaps boldly saying, or at least implying, that, if an impulse be allowable in itself, it must be always right in an individual, nay, that self-gratification is its own warrant, and that temptation is the voice of God. Why should I attempt to analyze the intermingling influences, or to describe the combined power, of pride and lust,—lust exploring a way to evil, and pride fortifying the road,—till the first elementary truths of Revelation are looked upon as mere nursery tales? No, I have intended nothing more than to put wretched nature upon its course, as I may call it, and there to leave it, my brethren, to your reflections, to that individual comment which each of you may be able to put on this faint delineation, realizing in your own mind and your own conscience what no words can duly set forth.

His secular course proceeds: the boy has become a man; he has taken up a profession or a trade; he has fair success in it; he marries, as his father did before him. He plays his part in the scene of mortal life; his connections extend as he gets older: whether in a higher or a lower sphere of society, he has his reputation and his influence: the reputation and the influence of, we will say, a sensible, prudent, and shrewd man. His children grow up around him; middle age is over,—his sun declines in the heavens. In the balance and by the measure of the world, he is come to an honorable and venerable old age; he has been a child of the world, and the world acknowledges and praises him. But what is he in the balance of heaven? What shall we say of God's judgment of him? What about his soul?—about his *soul?* Ah, his soul; he had forgotten that; he had forgotten he had a soul, but it remains from first to last in the sight of its Maker. *Posuisti sæculum nostrum in illuminatione vultûs Tui;* "Thou hast placed our life in the illumination of Thy countenance." Alas! alas! about his soul the world knows, the world cares, nought; it does not recognize the soul; it owns nothing in him but an intellect manifested in a mortal frame; it cares for the man while he is *here*, it loses sight of him when he is *there*. Still the time is coming when he is leaving *here*, and will find himself *there;* he is going out of sight, amid the shadows of that unseen world, about which the visible world is so sceptical; so, it concerns us who have a belief in that unseen world, to inquire, "How fares it all this while with his soul?" Alas! he has had pleasures and satisfactions in life, he has, I say, a good name among men; he sobered his views as life went on, and he began to think that order and religion were good things, that a certain deference was to be paid to the religion of his country, and a certain attendance to be given to its public worship; but he is still, in our Lord's words, nothing else but a whited sepulchre; he is foul within with the bones of the dead and all uncleanness. All the sins of his youth, never repented of, never really put away, his old profanenesses, his impurities, his animosities, his idolatries, are rotting with him; only covered over and hidden by successive layers of newer and later sins. His heart is the home of darkness, it has been handled, defiled, possessed by evil spirits; he is a being without faith, and without hope; if he holds anything for truth, it is only as an opinion, and if he has a sort of calmness and peace, it is the calmness, not of heaven, but of decay and dissolution. And now his old enemy has thrust aside his good Angel, and is sitting near him; rejoicing in his victory, and patiently waiting for his prey; not tempting him to fresh sins lest they should disturb his conscience, but simply letting well alone; letting him amuse himself with shadows of faith, shadows of piety, shadows of worship; aiding him readily in dressing himself up in some form of religion which may satisfy the weakness of his declining age, as knowing well that he cannot last long, that his death is a matter of time, and that he shall soon be able to carry him down with him to his fiery dwelling.

O how awful! and at last the inevitable hour is come. He dies—he dies quietly—his friends are satisfied about him. They return thanks that God has taken him, has released him from the troubles of life and the pains of sickness; "a good father," they say, "a good neighbor," "sincerely lamented," "lamented by a large circle of friends." Perhaps they add, "dying with a firm trust in the mercy of God";—nay, he has need of something beyond mercy, he has need of some attribute which is inconsistent with perfection, and which is not, cannot be, in the All-glorious, All-holy God;—"with a trust," forsooth, "in the promises of the Gospel," which never were his, or were early forfeited. And then, as time travels on, every now and then is heard some passing remembrance of him, respectful or tender; but he all the while (in spite of this false world, and though its children will not have it so, and exclaim, and protest, and are indignant when so solemn a truth is hinted at), he is lifting up his eyes, being in torment, and lies "buried in hell."

Such is the history of a man in a state of nature, or in a state of defection, to whom the Gospel has never been a reality, in whom the good seed has never taken root, on whom God's grace has been shed in vain, with whom it has never prevailed so far as to make him seek His face and to ask for those higher gifts which lead to heaven. Such is his dark record. But I have spoken of only one man: alas! my dear brethren, it is the record of thousands; it is, in one shape or other, the record of all the children of the world. "As soon as they are born," the wise man says, "they forthwith have ceased to be, and they are powerless to show any sign of virtue, and are wasted away in their wickedness." They may be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, polished or rude, decent outwardly and self-disciplined, or scandalous in their lives,—but at bottom they are all one and the same; they have no faith, they have no love; they are impure, they are proud; they all agree together very well, both in opinions and in conduct; they see that they agree; and this agreement they take as a proof that their conduct is right and their opinions true. Such as is the tree, such is the fruit; no wonder the fruit is the same in all when it comes of the same root of unregenerate, unrenewed nature; but they consider it good and wholesome, because it is matured in so many; and they chase away, as odious, unbearable, and horrible, the pure and heavenly doctrine of Revelation, because it is so severe upon themselves. No one likes bad news, no one welcomes what condemns him; the world slanders the Truth in self-defense, because the Truth denounces the world.

My brethren, if these things be so, or rather (for this is the point here), if we Catholics firmly believe them to be so, so firmly believe them that we feel it would be happy for us to die rather than doubt them, is it wonderful, does it require any abstruse explanation, that men minded as we are should come into the midst of a population such as this, and into a neighborhood where religious error has sway, and where corruption of life prevails both as its cause and as its consequence;—a population, not worse indeed than the rest of the world, but not better; not better, because it has not with it the gift of Catholic truth; not purer, because it has not within it that gift of grace which alone can destroy impurity; a population, sinful, I am certain, given to unlawful indulgences, laden with guilt and exposed to eternal ruin, because it is not blessed with that Presence of the Word Incarnate, which diffuses sweetness, and tranquillity, and chastity over the heart;—is it a thing to be marvelled at, that we begin to preach to such a population as this, for which Christ died, and try to convert it to Him and to His Church? Is it necessary to ask for reasons? is it necessary to assign motives of this world, for a proceeding which is so natural in those who believe in the announcements and requirements of the other? My dear brethren, if we are sure that the Most Holy Redeemer has shed His blood for all men, is it not a very plain and simple consequence that we, His servants, His brethren, His priests, should be unwilling to see that blood shed in vain,—wasted I may say, as regards you, and should wish to make you partakers of those benefits which have been vouchsafed to ourselves? Is it necessary for any bystander to call us vainglorious, or ambitious, or restless, greedy of authority, fond of power, resentful, party-spirited, or the like, when here is so much more powerful, more present, more influential a motive to which our eagerness and zeal may be ascribed? What is so powerful an incentive to preaching as the sure belief that it is the preaching of the truth? What so constrains to the conversion of souls, as the consciousness that they are at present in guilt and in peril? What so great a persuasive to bring men into the Church, as the conviction that it is the special means by which God effects the salvation of those whom the world trains in sin and unbelief? Only admit us to believe what we profess, and surely that is not asking a great deal (for what have we done that we should be distrusted?)—only admit us to believe what we profess, and you will understand without difficulty what we are doing. We come among you, because we believe there is but one way of salvation, marked out from the beginning, and that you are not walking along it; we come among you as ministers of that extraordinary grace of God, which you need; we come among you because we have received a great gift from God ourselves, and wish you to be partakers of our joy; because it is written, "Freely ye have received, freely give"; because we dare not hide in a napkin those mercies, and that grace of God, which have been given us, not for our own sake only, but for the benefit of others.

Such a zeal, poor and feeble though it be in us, has been the very life of the Church, and the breath of her preachers and missionaries in all ages. It was a fire such as this which brought our Lord from heaven, and which He desired, which He travailed, to communicate to all around Him. "I am come to send fire on the earth," He says, "and what will I, but that it be kindled?" Such, too, was the feeling of the great Apostle to whom his Lord appeared in order to impart to him this fire. "I send thee to the Gentiles," He had said to him on his conversion, "to open their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." And, accordingly, he at once began to preach to them, that they should do penance, and turn to God with worthy fruits of penance, "for," as he says, "the charity of Christ constrained him," and he was "made all things to all that he might save all," and he "bore all for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory." Such, too, was the fire of zeal which burned within those preachers, to whom we English owe our Christianity. What brought them from Rome to this distant isle and to a barbarous people, amid many fears, and with much suffering, but the sovereign uncontrollable desire to save the perishing, and to knit the members and slaves of Satan into the body of Christ? This has been the secret of the propagation of the Church from the very first, and will be to the end; this is why the Church, under the grace of God, to the surprise of the world, converts the nations, and why no sect can do the like; this is why Catholic missionaries throw themselves so generously among the fiercest savages, and risk the most cruel torments, as knowing the worth of the soul, as realizing the world to come, as loving their brethren dearly, though they never saw them, as shuddering at the thought of the eternal woe, and as desiring to increase the fruit of their Lord's passion, and the triumph of His grace.

We, my brethren, are not worthy to be named in connection with Evangelists, Saints, and Martyrs; we come to you in a peaceable time and in a well-ordered state of society, and recommended by that secret awe and reverence, which, say what they will, Englishmen for the most part, or in good part, feel for that Religion of their fathers, which has left in the land so many memorials of its former sway. It requires no great zeal in us, no great charity, to come to you at no risk, and entreat you to turn from the path of death and be saved. It requires nothing great, nothing heroic, nothing saintlike; it does but require conviction, and that we have, that the Catholic Religion is given from God for the salvation of mankind, and that all other religions are but mockeries; it requires nothing more than faith, a single purpose, an honest heart, and a distinct utterance. We come to you in the name of God; we ask no more of you than that you listen to us; we ask no more than that you would judge for yourselves whether or not we speak God's words; it shall rest with you whether we be God's priests and prophets or no. This is not much to ask, but it is more than most men will grant; they do not dare listen to us, they are impatient through prejudice, or they dread conviction. Yes! many a one there is, who has even good reason to listen to us, nay, on whom we have a claim to be heard, who ought to have a certain trust in us, who yet shuts his ears, and turns away, and chooses to hazard eternity without weighing what we have to say. How frightful is this! but you are not, you cannot be such; we ask not *your* confidence, my brethren, for you have never known us: we are not asking you to take for granted what we say, for we are strangers to you; we do but simply bid you first to consider that you have souls to be saved, and next to judge for yourselves, whether, if God has revealed a religion of His own whereby to save those souls, that religion can be any other than the faith which we preach.

NEGLECT OF DIVINE CALLS AND WARNINGS.

NO one sins without making some excuse to himself for sinning. He is obliged to do so: man is not like the brute beasts; he has a divine gift within him which we call reason, and which constrains him to account before its judgment-seat for what he does. He cannot act at random; however he acts, he must act by some kind of rule, on some sort of principle, else he is vexed and dissatisfied with himself. Not that he is very particular whether he finds a good reason or a bad, when he is very much straitened for a reason; but a reason of some sort he must have. Hence you sometimes find those who give up religious duty altogether, attacking the conduct of religious men, whether their acquaintance, or the ministers or professors of religion, as a sort of excuse—a very bad one—for their neglect. Others will make the excuse that they are so far from church, or so closely occupied at home, whether they will or not, that they cannot serve God as they ought. Others say that it is no use trying to do so, that they have again and again gone to confession and tried to keep out of mortal sin, and cannot; and so they gave up the attempt as hopeless. Others, when they fall into sin, excuse themselves on the plea that they are but following nature; that the impulses of nature are so very strong, and that it cannot be wrong to follow that nature which God has given us. Others are bolder still, and they cast off religion altogether: they deny its truth; they deny Church, Gospel, and Bible; they go so far perhaps as even to deny God's governance of His creatures. They boldly deny that there is any life after death: and, this being the case, of course they would be fools indeed not to take their pleasure here, and to make as much of this poor life as they can.

And there are others, and to these I am going to address myself, who try to speak peace to themselves by cherishing the thought that something or other will happen after all to keep them from eternal ruin, though they now continue in their neglect of God; that it is a long time yet to death; that there are many chances in their favor; that they shall repent in process of time when they get old, as a matter of course; that they mean to repent some day; that they mean, sooner or later, seriously to take their state into account, and to make their ground good; and, if they are Catholics, they add, that they will take care to die with the last

Sacraments, and that therefore they need not trouble themselves about the matter.

Now these persons, my brethren, tempt God; they try Him, how far His goodness will go; and, it may be, they will try Him too long, and will have experience, not of His gracious forgiveness, but of His severity and His justice. In this spirit it was that the Israelites in the desert conducted themselves toward Almighty God: instead of feeling awe of Him, they were free with Him, treated Him familiarly, made excuses, preferred complaints, upbraided Him; as if the Eternal God had been a weak man, as if He had been their minister and servant; in consequence, we are told by the inspired historian, "The Lord sent among the people fiery serpents." To this St. Paul refers when he says, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents"; a warning to us now, that those who are forward and bold with their Almighty Saviour, will gain, not the pardon which they look for, but will find themselves within the folds of the old serpent, will drink in his poisonous breath, and at length will die under his fangs. That seducing spirit appeared in person to our Lord in the days of His flesh, and tried to entangle Him, the Son of the Highest, in this very sin. He placed Him on the pinnacle of the Temple, and said to Him, "If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, He has given His Angels charge of Thee, and in their hands they shall lift Thee, lest perchance Thou strike Thy foot against a stone"; but our Lord's answer was, "It is also written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." And so numbers are tempted now to cast themselves headlong down the precipice of sin, assuring themselves the while that they will never reach the hell which lies at the bottom, never dash upon its sharp rocks, or be plunged into its flames; for Angels and Saints are there, in their extremity, in their final need,—or at least, God's general mercies, or His particular promises,—to interpose and bear them away safely. Such is the sin of these men, my brethren, of which I am going to speak; not the sin of unbelief, or of pride, or of despair, but of presumption.

I will state more distinctly the kind of thoughts which go through their minds, and which quiet and satisfy them in their course of irreligion. They say to themselves, "I cannot give up sin now; I cannot give up this or that indulgence; I cannot break myself of this habit of intemperance; I cannot do without these unlawful gains; I cannot leave these employers or superiors, who keep me from following my conscience. It is impossible I should serve God now; and I have no leisure to look into myself; and I do not feel the wish to repent; I have no heart for religion. But it will come easier by and by; it will be as natural then to repent and be religious, as it is now natural to sin. I shall then have fewer temptations, fewer difficulties. Old people are sometimes indeed reprobates, but, generally speaking, they are religious; they are religious almost as a matter of course; they may curse and swear a little, and tell lies, and do such-like little things; but still they are clear of mortal sin, and would be safe if they were suddenly taken off." And when some particular temptation comes on them, they think, "It is only one sin, and once in a way; I never did the like before, and never will again while I live"; or, "I have done as bad before now, and it is only one sin more, and I shall have to repent anyhow; and while I am about it, it will be as easy to repent of one sin more as of one less, for I shall have to repent of *all* sin"; or again, "If I perish, I shall not want company;—what will happen to this person or that? I am quite a Saint compared with such a one; and I have known men repent, who have done much worse things than I have done."

Now, my dear brethren, those who make such excuses to themselves, know neither what sin is in its own nature, nor what their own sins are in particular; they understand neither the heinousness nor the multitude of their sins. It is necessary, then, to state distinctly one or two points of Catholic doctrine, which will serve to put this matter in a clearer view than men are accustomed to take of it. These truths are very simple and very obvious, but are quite forgotten by the persons of whom I have been speaking, or they would never be able to satisfy their reason and their conscience by such frivolous pleas and excuses, as those which I have been drawing out.

First then observe, that when a person says, "I have sinned as badly before now," or, "This is only one sin more," or, "I must repent anyhow, and then will repent once for all," and the like, he forgets that all his sins are in God's hand and in one page of the book of judgment, and already added up against him, according as each is committed, up to the last of them; that the sin he is now committing is not a mere single, isolated sin, but that it is one of a series, of a long catalogue; that though it be but one, it is not sin one, or sin two, or sin three in the list, but it is the thousandth, the ten thousandth, or the hundred thousandth, in a long course of sinning. It is not the first of his sins, but the last, and perhaps the very last and finishing sin. He himself forgets, manages to forget, or tries to forget, wishes to forget, all his antecedent sins, or remembers them merely as instances of his having sinned with impunity before, and proofs that he may sin with impunity still. But every sin has a history: it is not an accident; it is the fruit of former sins in thought or in deed; it is the token of a habit deeply seated and widely spread; it is the aggravation of a virulent disease; and, as the last straw is said to break the horse's back, so our last sin, whatever it is, is that which destroys our hope and forfeits our place in heaven. Therefore, my brethren, it is but the craft of the devil, which makes you take your sins one by one, while God views them as a whole. "*Signasti, quasi in sacculo, delicta mea*," says holy Job, "Thou hast sealed up my sins as in a bag," and one day they will all be counted out. Separate sins are like the touches and strokes which the painter gives, first one and then another, to the picture on his canvas; or like the stones which the mason piles up and cements together for the house he is building. They are all connected together; they tend to a whole; they look toward an end, and they hasten on to their fulfilment.

Go, commit this sin, my brethren, to which you are tempted, which you persist in viewing in itself alone, look on it as Eve looked on the forbidden fruit, dwell upon its lightness and insignificance; and perhaps you may find it after all to be just the coping-stone of your high tower of rebellion, which comes into remembrance before God, and fills up the measure of your iniquities. "Fill ye up," says our Lord to the hypocritical Pharisees, "the measure of your fathers." The wrath, which came on Jerusalem, was not simply caused by the sins of that day, in which Christ came, though in that day was committed the most awful of all sins, viz., His rejection; for that was but the crowning sin of a long course of rebellion. So again, in an earlier age, the age of Abraham, ere the chosen people had got possession of the land of promise, there was already great and heinous sin among the heathen who inhabited it, yet they were not put out at once, and Abraham brought in;—why? because God's mercies were not yet exhausted toward them. He still bestowed His grace on the abandoned people, and waited for their repentance. But He foresaw that He should wait in vain, and that the time of vengeance would come; and this He implied when He said that He did not give the chosen seed the land at once, "for as yet the iniquities of the Amorrhites were not at the full." But they did come to the full some hundred years afterward, and then the Israelites were brought in, with the command to destroy them utterly with the sword. And again, you know the history of the impious Baltassar. In his proud feast, when he was now filled with wine, he sent for the gold and silver vessels which belonged to the Temple at Jerusalem, and had been brought to Babylon on the taking of the holy city,—he sent for these sacred vessels, that out of them he might drink more wine, he, his nobles, his wives, and his concubines. In that hour, the fingers as of a man's hand were seen upon the wall of the banqueting-room, writing the doom of the king and of his kingdom. The words were these: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and hath finished it: thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting." That wretched prince had kept no account of his sins; as a spendthrift keeps no account of his debts, so he went on day after day and year after year, revelling in pride, cruelty, and sensual indulgence, and insulting his Master, till at length he exhausted the Divine Mercy, and filled up the chalice of wrath. His hour came: one more sin he did, and the cup overflowed; vengeance overtook him on the instant, and he was cut off from the earth.

And that last sin need not be a great sin, need not be greater than those which have gone before it; perhaps it may be less. There was a rich man, mentioned by our Lord, who, when his crops were plentiful, said within himself, "What shall I do, for I have not where to bestow my fruits? I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer." He was carried off that very night. This was not a very striking sin, and surely it was not his first great sin; it was the last instance of a long course of acts of self-sufficiency and forgetfulness of God, not greater in intensity than any before it, but completing their number. And so again, when the father of that impious king, whom I just now spoke of, when Nabuchodonosor had for a whole year neglected the warning of the prophet Daniel, calling him to turn from his pride and to repent, one day as he walked in the palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the home of the kingdom, in the strength of my power and in the glory of my excellence?" and forthwith, while the word was yet in his mouth, judgment came upon him, and he was smitten with a new and strange disease, so that he was driven from men, and ate hay like the ox, and grew wild in his appearance, and lived in the open field. His consummating act of pride was not greater, perhaps, than any one of those which through the twelvemonth had preceded it.

No; you cannot decide, my brethren, whether you are outrunning God's mercy, merely because the sin you now commit seems to be a small one; it is not always the greatest sin that is the last. Moreover, you cannot calculate, which is to be your last sin, by the particular number of those which have gone before it, even if you could count them, for the number varies in different persons. This is another very serious circumstance. You may have committed but one or two sins, and yet find that you are ruined beyond redemption, though others who have done more are not. Why we know not, but God, who shows mercy and gives grace to all, shows greater mercy and gives more abundant grace to one man than another. To all He gives grace sufficient for their salvation; to all He gives far more than they have any right to expect, and they can claim nothing; but to some He gives far more than to others. He tells us Himself, that, if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had seen the miracles done in Chorazin, they would have done penance and turned to Him. That is, there was that which would have converted them, and it was not granted to them. Till we set this before ourselves, we have not a right view either of sin in itself, or of our own prospects if we live in it. As God determines for each the measure of his stature, and the complexion of his mind, and the number of his days, yet not the same for all; as one child of Adam is preordained to live one day, and another eighty years, so is it fixed that one should be reserved for his eightieth sin, another cut off after his first. Why this is, we know not; but it is parallel to what is done in human matters without exciting any surprise. Of two convicted offenders one is pardoned, one is left to suffer; and this might be done in a case where there was nothing to choose between the guilt of the one and of the other, and where the reasons which determine the difference of dealing toward the one and the other, whatever they are, are external to the individuals themselves. In like manner you have heard, I daresay, of decimating rebels, when they had been captured, that is, of executing every tenth and letting off the rest. So it is also with God's judgments, though we cannot sound the reasons of them. He is not bound to let off any; He has the power to condemn all: I only bring this to show how our rule of justice here below does not preclude a difference of dealing with one man and with another. The Creator gives one man time for repentance, He carries off another by sudden death. He allows one man to die with the last Sacraments; another dies without a Priest to receive his imperfect contrition, and to absolve him; the one is pardoned, and will go to heaven; the other goes to the place of eternal punishment. No one can say how it will happen in his own case; no one can promise himself that he shall have time for repentance; or, if he have time, that he shall have any supernatural movement of the heart toward God; or, even then, that a Priest will be at hand to give him absolution. We may have sinned less than our next-door neighbor, yet that neighbor may be reserved for repentance and may reign with Christ, while we may be punished with the evil spirit.

Nay, some have been cut off and sent to hell for their first sin. This was the case, as divines teach, as regards the rebel Angels. For their first sin, and that a sin of thought, a single perfected act of pride, they lost their first estate, and became devils. And Saints and holy people record instances of men, and even children, who in like manner have uttered a first blasphemy or other deliberate sin, and were cut off without remedy. And a number of similar instances occur in Scripture; I mean of the awful punishment of a single sin, without respect to the virtue and general excellence of the sinner. Adam, for a single sin, small in appearance, the eating of the forbidden fruit, lost Paradise, and implicated all his posterity in his own ruin. The Bethsamites were irreverent toward the ark of the Lord, and more than fifty thousand of them in consequence were smitten. Oza touched it with his hand, as if to save it from falling, and he was struck dead on the spot for his rashness. The man of God from Juda ate bread and drank water at Bethel, against the command of God, and he was forthwith killed by a lion on his return. Ananias and Sapphira told one lie, and fell down dead almost as the words left their mouth. Who are we, that God should wait for our repentance any longer, when He has not waited at all, before He cut off those who sinned less than we?

O my dear brethren, these presumptuous thoughts of ours arise from a defective notion of the malignity of sin viewed in itself. We are criminals, and we are no judges in our own case. We are fond of ourselves, and we take our own part, and we are familiar with sin, and, from pride, we do not like to confess ourselves lost. For all these reasons, we have no real idea what sin is, what its punishment is, and what grace is. We do not know what sin is, because we do not know what God is; we have no standard with which to compare it, till we know what God is. Only God's glories, His perfections, His holiness, His majesty, His beauty, can teach us by the contrast how to think of sin; and since we do not see God here, till we see Him, we cannot form a just judgment what sin is, till we enter heaven, we must take what God tells us of sin, mainly on faith. Nay, even then, we shall be able to condemn sin, only so far as we are able to see and praise and glorify God; He alone can duly judge of sin who can comprehend God; He only judged of sin according to the fulness of its evil, who, knowing the Father from eternity with a perfect knowledge, showed what He thought of sin by dying for it; He only, who was willing, though He was God, to suffer inconceivable pains of soul and body in order to make a satisfaction for it. Take His word, or rather, His deed, for the truth of this awful doctrine,—that a single mortal sin is enough to cut you off from God forever. Go down to the grave with a single unrepented, unforgiven sin upon you, and you have enough to sink you down to hell; you have that, which to a certainty will be your ruin. It may be the hundredth sin, or it may be the first sin, no matter: one is enough to sink you; though the more you have, the deeper you will sink. You need not have your fill of sin in order to perish without remedy; there are those who lose both this world and the next; they choose rebellion, and receive, not its gains, but death.

Or grant, that God's anger delays its course, and you have time to add sin to sin, this is only to increase the punishment when it comes. God is terrible, when He speaks to the sinner; He is more terrible, when

He refrains; He is more terrible, when He is silent and accumulates wrath. Alas! there are those who are allowed to spend a long life, and a happy life, in neglect of Him, and have nothing in the outward course of things to remind them of what is coming, till their irreversible sentence bursts upon them. As the stream flows smoothly before the cataract, so with these persons does life pass along swiftly and silently, serenely and joyously. "They are not in the labor of men, neither shall they be scourged like other men." "They are filled with hidden things; they are full of children, and leave what remains of them to their little ones." "Their houses are secure and at peace, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in good, and in a moment they go down to hell." So was it with Jerusalem, when God had deserted it; it seemed never so prosperous before. Herod the king had lately rebuilt the Temple; and the marbles with which it was cased were wonderful for size and beauty, and it rose bright and glittering in the morning sun. The disciples called their Lord to look at it, but He did but see in it the whited sepulchre of a reprobate people, and foretold its overthrow. "See ye all these things?" He answered them, "Amen, I say to you, stone shall not be here left upon stone, which shall not be thrown down." And "He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, and in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes!" Hid, indeed, was her doom; for millions crowded within the guilty city at her yearly festival, and her end seemed a long way off, and ruin to belong to a far future age, when it was at the door.

O the change, my brethren, the dismal change at last when the sentence has gone forth, and life ends, and eternal death begins! The poor sinner has gone on so long in sin, that he has forgotten he has sin to repent of. He has learned to forget that he is living in a state of enmity to God. He no longer makes excuses, as he did at first. He lives in the world, and believes nothing about the Sacraments, nor puts any trust in a Priest if he falls in with one. Perhaps he has hardly ever heard the Catholic religion mentioned except for the purpose of abuse; and never has spoken of it, but to ridicule it. His thoughts are taken up with his family and with his occupation; and if he thinks of death, it is with repugnance, as what will separate him from this world, not with fear, as what will introduce him to another. He has ever been strong and hale. He has never had an illness. His family is long-lived, and he reckons he has a long time before him. His friends die before him, and he feels rather contempt at their nothingness, than sorrow at their departure. He has just married a daughter, or established a son in life, and he thinks of retiring from his labors, except that he is at a loss to know how he shall employ himself when he is out of work. He cannot get himself to dwell upon the thought of what and where he will be, when life is over, or, if he begins to muse awhile over himself and his prospects, then he is sure of one thing, that the Creator is absolute and mere benevolence, and he is indignant and impatient when he hears eternal punishment spoken of. And so he fares, whether for a long time or a short; but whatever the period, it must have an end, and at last the end comes. Time has gone forward noiselessly, and comes upon him like a thief in the night; at length the hour of doom strikes, and he is taken away.

Perhaps, however, he was a Catholic, and then the very mercies of God have been perverted by him to his ruin. He has rested on the Sacraments, without caring to have the proper dispositions for attending them. At one time he had lived in neglect of religion altogether; but there was a date when he felt a wish to set himself right with his Maker; so he began, and has continued ever since, to go to Confession and Communion at convenient intervals. He comes again and again to the Priest; he goes through his sins; the Priest is obliged to take his account of them, which is a very defective account, and sees no reason for not giving him absolution. He is absolved, as far as words can absolve him; he comes again to the Priest when the season comes round; again he confesses, and again he has the form pronounced over him. He falls sick, he receives the last Sacraments: he receives the last rites of the Church, and he is lost. He is lost, because he has never really turned his heart to God; or, if he had some poor measure of contrition for a while, it did not last beyond his first or second confession. He soon taught himself to come to the Sacraments without any contrition at all; he deceived himself, and left out his principal and most important sins. Somehow he deceived himself into the notion that they were not sins, or not mortal sins; for some reason or other he was silent, and his confession became as defective as his contrition. Yet this scanty show of religion was sufficient to soothe and stupefy his conscience: so he went on year after year, never making a good confession, communicating in mortal sin, till he fell ill; and then, I say, the viaticum and holy oil were brought to him, and he committed sacrilege for his last time,—and so he went to his God.

O what a moment for the poor soul, when it comes to itself, and finds itself suddenly before the judgment-seat of Christ! O what a moment, when, breathless with the journey, and dizzy with the brightness, and overwhelmed with the strangeness of what is happening to him, and unable to realize where he is, the sinner hears the voice of the accusing spirit, bringing up all the sins of his past life, which he has forgotten, or which he has explained away, which he would not allow to be sins, though he suspected they were; when he hears him detailing all the mercies of God which he has despised, all His warnings which he has set at nought, all His judgments which he has outlived; when that evil one follows out into detail the growth and progress of a lost soul,—how it expanded and was confirmed in sin,—how it budded forth into leaves and flowers, grew into branches, and ripened into fruit,—till nothing was wanted for its full condemnation! And, O! still more terrible, still more distracting, when the Judge speaks, and consigns it to the jailors, till it shall pay the endless debt which lies against it! "Impossible, I a lost soul! I separated from hope and from peace forever! It it not I of whom the Judge so spake! There is a mistake somewhere; Christ, Saviour, hold Thy hand,—one minute to explain it! My name is Demas: I am but Demas, not Judas, or Nicolas, or Alexander, or Philetus, or Diotrephes. What? hopeless pain! for me! impossible, it shall not be." And the poor soul struggles and wrestles in the grasp of the mighty demon which has hold of it, and whose every touch is torment. "Oh, atrocious!" it shrieks in agony, and in anger too, as if the very keenness of the affliction were a proof of its injustice. "A second! and a third! I can bear no more! stop, horrible fiend, give over; I am a man, and not such as thou! I am not food for thee, or sport for thee! I never was in hell as thou, I have not on me the smell of fire, nor the taint of the charnel-house! I know what human feelings are; I have been taught religion; I have had a conscience; I have a cultivated mind; I am well versed in science and art; I have been refined by literature; I have had an eye for the beauties of nature; I am a philosopher or a poet, or a shrewd observer of men, or a hero, or a statesman, or an orator, or a man of wit and humor. Nay,—I am a Catholic; I am not an unregenerate Protestant; I have received the grace of the Redeemer; I have attended the Sacraments for years; I have been a Catholic from a child; I am a son of the Martyrs; I died in communion with the Church: nothing, nothing which I have ever been, which I have ever seen, bears any resemblance to thee, and to the flame and stench which exhale from thee; so I defy thee, and abjure thee, O enemy of man!"

Alas! poor soul; and whilst it thus fights with that destiny which it has brought upon itself, and with those companions whom it has chosen, the man's name perhaps is solemnly chanted forth, and his memory decently cherished among his friends on earth. His readiness in speech, his fertility in thought, his sagacity, or his wisdom, are not forgotten. Men talk of him from time to time; they appeal to his authority; they quote his words; perhaps they even raise a monument to his name, or write his history. "So comprehensive a mind! such a power of throwing light on a perplexed subject, and bringing conflicting ideas or facts into harmony!" "Such a speech it was that he made on such and such an occasion; I happened to be present, and never shall forget it"; or, "It was the saying of a very sensible man"; or, "A great personage, whom some of us knew"; or, "It was a rule with a very worthy and excellent friend of mine, now no more"; or, "Never was his equal in society, so just in his remarks, so versatile, so unobtrusive"; or, "I was fortunate to see him once when I was a boy"; or, "So great a benefactor to his country and to his kind!" "His discoveries so great"; or, "His philosophy so profound." O vanity! vanity of vanities, all is vanity! What profiteth it? What profiteth it? His soul is in hell. O ye children of men, while thus ye speak, his soul is in the beginning of those torments in which his body will soon have part, and which will never die.

Vanity of vanities! misery of miseries! they will not attend to us, they will not believe us. We are but a few in number, and they are many; and the many will not give credit to the few. O misery of miseries! Thousands are dying daily; they are waking up into God's everlasting wrath; they look back on the days of the flesh, and call them few and evil; they despise and scorn the very reasonings which then they trusted, and which have been disproved by the event; they curse the recklessness which made them put off repentance; they have fallen under His justice, whose mercy they presumed upon;—and their companions and friends are going on as they did, and are soon to join them. As the last generation presumed, so does the present. The father would not believe that God could punish, and now the son will not believe; the father was indignant when eternal pain was spoken of, and the son gnashes his teeth and smiles contemptuously. The world spoke well of itself thirty years ago, and so will it thirty years to come. And thus it is that this vast flood of life is carried on from age to age; myriads trifling with God's love, tempting His justice, and like the herd of swine, falling headlong down the steep! O mighty God! O God of love! it is too much! it broke the heart of Thy sweet Son Jesus to see the misery of man spread out before His eyes. He died by it as well as for it. And we, too, in our measure, our eyes ache, and our hearts sicken, and our heads reel, when we but feebly contemplate it. O most tender heart of Jesus, why wilt Thou not end, when wilt Thou end, this ever-growing load of sin and woe? When wilt Thou chase away the devil into his own hell, and close the pit's mouth, that Thy chosen may rejoice in Thee, quitting the thought of those who perish in their wilfulness? But, oh! by those five dear Wounds in Hands, and Feet, and Side—perpetual founts of mercy, from which the fulness of the Eternal Trinity flows ever fresh, ever powerful, ever bountiful to all who seek Thee—if the world must still endure, at least gather Thou a larger and a larger harvest, an ampler proportion of souls out of it into Thy garner, that these latter times may, in sanctity, and glory, and the triumphs of Thy grace, exceed the former.

"*Deus misereatur nostri, et benedicat nobis*"; "God, have mercy on us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy on us; that we may know Thy way upon earth, Thy salvation among all the nations. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee. Let the nations be glad, and leap for joy; because Thou dost judge the people in equity, and dost direct the nations on the earth. God, even our God, bless us; may God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him."

MEN, NOT ANGELS, THE PRIESTS OF THE GOSPEL.

WHEN Christ, the great Prophet, the great Preacher, the great Missionary, came into the world, He came in a way the most holy, the most august, and the most glorious. Though He came in humiliation, though He came to suffer, though He was born in a stable, though He was laid in a manger, yet He issued from the womb of an Immaculate Mother, and His infant form shone with heavenly light. Sanctity marked every lineament of His character and every circumstance of His mission. Gabriel announced His incarnation; a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bore, a Virgin suckled Him; His foster-father was the pure and saintly Joseph; Angels proclaimed His birth; a luminous star spread the news among the heathen; the austere Baptist went before His face; and a crowd of shriven penitents, clad in white garments and radiant with grace, followed Him wherever He went. As the sun in heaven shines through the clouds, and is reflected in the landscape, so the eternal Sun of justice, when He rose upon the earth, turned night into day, and in His brightness made all things bright.

He came and He went; and, seeing that He came to introduce a new and final Dispensation into the world, He left behind Him preachers, teachers, and missionaries, in His stead. Well then, my brethren, you will say, since on His coming all about Him was so glorious, such as He was, such must His servants be, such His representatives, His ministers, in His absence; as He was without sin, they too must be without sin; as He was the Son of God, they must surely be Angels. Angels, you will say, must be appointed to this high office; Angels alone are fit to preach the birth, the sufferings, the death of God. They might indeed have to hide their brightness, as He before them, their Lord and Master, had put on a disguise; they might come, as they came under the Old Covenant, in the garb of men; but still, men they could not be, if they were to be preachers of the everlasting Gospel, and dispensers of its divine mysteries. If they were to sacrifice, as He had sacrificed; to continue, repeat, apply, the very Sacrifice which He had offered; to take into their hands that very Victim which was He Himself; to bind and to loose, to bless and to ban, to receive the confessions of His people, and to give them absolution for their sins; to teach them the way of truth, and to guide them along the way of peace; who was sufficient for these things but an inhabitant of those blessed realms of which the Lord is the never-failing Light?

And yet, my brethren, so it is, He has sent forth for the ministry of reconciliation, not Angels, but men; He has sent forth your brethren to you, not beings of some unknown nature and some strange blood, but of your own bone and your own flesh, to preach to you. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Here is the royal style and tone in which Angels speak to men, even though these men be Apostles; it is the tone of those who, having never sinned, speak from their lofty eminence to those who have. But such is not the tone of those whom Christ has sent; for it is your brethren whom He has appointed, and none else,—sons of Adam, sons of your nature, the same by nature, differing only in grace,—men, like you, exposed to temptations, to the same temptations, to the same warfare within and without; with the same three deadly enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil; with the same human, the same wayward heart: differing only as the power of God has changed and rules it. So it is; we are not Angels from Heaven that speak to you, but men, whom grace, and grace alone, has made to differ from you. Listen to the Apostle:—When the barbarous Lycaonians, seeing his miracle, would have sacrificed to him and St. Barnabas, as to gods, he rushed in among them, crying out, "O men, why do ye this? we also are mortals, men like unto you"; or, as the words run more forcibly in the original Greek "We are of like passions with you." And again to the Corinthians he writes, "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord; and ourselves your servants through Jesus. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, He hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus; *but* we hold this treasure *in earthen vessels*." And further, he says of himself most wonderfully, that, "lest he should be exalted by the greatness of the revelations," there was given him "an angel of Satan" in his flesh "to buffet him." Such are your Ministers, your Preachers, your Priests, O my brethren; not Angels, not Saints, not sinless, but those who would have lived and died in sin except for God's grace, and who, though through God's mercy they be in training for the fellowship of Saints hereafter, yet at present are in the midst of infirmity and temptation, and have no hope, except from the unmerited grace of God, of persevering unto the end.

What a strange, what a striking anomaly is this! All is perfect, all is heavenly, all is glorious, in the Dispensation which Christ has vouchsafed us, except the persons of His Ministers. He dwells on our altars Himself, the Most Holy, the Most High, in light inaccessible, and Angels fall down before Him there; and out of visible substances and forms He chooses what is choicest to represent and to hold Him. The finest wheat-flour, and the purest wine, are taken as His outward symbols; the most sacred and majestic words minister to the sacrificial rite; altar and sanctuary are adorned decently or splendidly, as our means allow; and the Priests perform their office in befitting vestments, lifting up chaste hearts and holy hands; yet those very Priests, so set apart, so consecrated, they, with their girdle of celibacy and their maniple of sorrow, are sons of Adam, sons of sinners; of a fallen nature, which they have not put off, though it be renewed through grace, so that it is almost the definition of a Priest that he has sins of his own to offer for. "Every high Priest," says the Apostle, "taken from among men, is appointed for men, in the things that appertain unto God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can condole with those who are in ignorance and error, because he also himself is compassed with infirmity. And therefore he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins." And hence in the Mass, when he offers up the Host before consecration, he says, *Suscipe*, *Sancte Pater*, *Omnipotens*, *æterne Deus*, "Accept, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God, this immaculate Host, which I, Thine unworthy servant, offer to Thee, my Living and True God, for *mine* innumerable sins, offenses, and negligences, *and* for all who stand around, and for all faithful Christians, living and dead."

Most strange is this in itself, my brethren, but not strange, when you consider it is the appointment of an all-merciful God; not strange in Him, because the Apostle gives the reason of it in the passage I have quoted. The priests of the New Law are men, in order that they may "condole with those who are in ignorance and error, because they too are compassed with infirmity." Had Angels been your Priests, my brethren, they could not have condoled with you, sympathized with you, have had compassion on you, felt tenderly for you, and made allowances for you, as we can; they could not have been your patterns and guides, and have led you on from your old selves into a new life, as they can who come from the midst of you, who have been led on themselves as you are to be led, who know well your difficulties, who have had experience, at least of your temptations, who know the strength of the flesh and the wiles of the devil, even though they have baffled them, who are already disposed to take your part, and be indulgent toward you, and can advise you most practically, and warn you most seasonably and prudently. Therefore did He send you men to be the ministers of reconciliation and intercession; as He Himself, though He could not sin, yet even He, by becoming man, took on Him, as far as was possible to God, man's burden of infirmity and trial in His own person. He could not be a sinner, but

He could be a man, and He took to Himself a man's heart that we might intrust our hearts to Him, and "was tempted in all things, like as we are, yet without sin."

Ponder this truth well, my brethren, and let it be your comfort. Among the Preachers, among the Priests of the Gospel, there have been Apostles, there have been Martyrs, there have been Doctors;—Saints in plenty among them; yet out of them all, high as has been their sanctity, varied their graces, awful their gifts, there has not been one who did not begin with the old Adam; not one of them who was not hewn out of the same rock as the most obdurate of reprobates; not one of them who was not fashioned unto honor out of the same clay which has been the material of the most polluted and vile of sinners; not one who was not by nature brother of those poor souls who have now commenced an eternal fellowship with the devil, and are lost in hell. Grace has vanquished nature; that is the whole history of the Saints. Salutary thought for those who are tempted to pride themselves in what they do, and what they are; wonderful news for those who sorrowfully recognize in their hearts the vast difference that exists between them and the Saints; and joyful news, when men hate sin, and wish to escape from its miserable yoke, yet are tempted to think it impossible!

Come, my brethren, let us look at this truth more narrowly, and lay it to heart. First consider, that, since Adam fell, none of his seed but has been conceived in sin; none, save one. One exception there has been,—who is that one? not our Lord Jesus, for He was not conceived of man, but of the Holy Ghost; not our Lord: but I mean His Virgin Mother, who though conceived and born of human parents, as others, yet was rescued by anticipation from the common condition of mankind, and never was partaker in fact of Adam's transgression. She was conceived in the way of nature, she was conceived as others are; but grace interfered and was beforehand with sin; grace filled her soul from the first moment of her existence, so that the evil one breathed not on her, nor stained the work of God. *Tota pulchra es, Maria; et macula originalis non est in te.* "Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the stain original is not in thee." But putting aside the Most Blessed Mother of God, every one else, the most glorious Saint, and the most black and odious of sinners, I mean, the soul which, in the event, became the most glorious, and the soul which became the most devilish, were both born in one and the same original sin, both were children of wrath, both were unable to attain heaven by their natural powers, both had the prospect of meriting for themselves hell.

They were both born in sin; they both lay in sin: and the soul, which afterward became a Saint, would have continued in sin, would have sinned wilfully, and would have been lost, but for the visitings of an unmerited supernatural influence upon it, which did for it what it could not do for itself. The poor infant, destined to be an heir of glory, lay feeble, sickly, fretful, wayward, and miserable; the child of sorrow; without hope, and without heavenly aid. So it lay for many a long and weary day ere it was born; and when at length it opened its eyes and saw the light, it shrank back, and wept aloud that it had seen it. But God heard its cry from heaven in this valley of tears, and He began that course of mercies toward it which led it from earth to heaven. He sent His Priest to administer to it the first sacrament, and to baptize it with His grace. Then a great change took place in it, for, instead of its being any more the thrall of Satan it forthwith became a child of God; and had it died that minute, and before it came to the age of reason, it would have been carried to heaven without delay by Angels, and been admitted into the presence of God.

But it did not die; it came to the age of reason, and, O, shall we dare to say, though in some blessed cases it may be said, shall we dare to say, that it did not misuse the great talent which had been given to it, profane the grace which dwelt in it, and fall into mortal sin? In some instances, praised be God! we dare affirm it; such seems to have been the case with my own dear father, St. Philip, who surely kept his baptismal robe unsullied from the day he was clad in it, never lost his state of grace, from the day he was put into it, and proceeded from strength to strength, and from merit to merit, and from glory to glory, through the whole course of his long life, till at the age of eighty he was summoned to his account, and went joyfully to meet it, and was carried across purgatory, without any scorching of its flames, straight to heaven.

Such certainly have sometimes been the dealings of God's grace with the souls of His elect; but more commonly, as if more intimately to associate them with their brethren, and to make the fulness of His favors to them a ground of hope and an encouragement to the penitent sinner, those who have ended in being miracles of sanctity, and heroes in the Church, have passed a time in wilful disobedience, have thrown themselves out of the light of God's countenance, have been led captive by this or that sin, by this or that religious error, till at length they were in various ways recovered, slowly or suddenly, and regained the state of grace, or rather a much higher state, than that which they had forfeited. Such was the blessed Magdalen, who had lived a life of shame; so much so, that even to be touched by her was, according to the religious judgment of her day, a pollution. Happy in this world's goods, young and passionate, she had given her heart to the creature, before the grace of God prevailed with her. Then she cut off her long hair, and put aside her gay apparel, and became so utterly what she had not been, that, had you known her before and after, you had said it was two persons you had seen, not one; for there was no trace of the sinner in the penitent, except the affectionate heart, now set on heaven and Christ; no trace besides, no memory of that glittering and seductive apparition, in the modest form, the serene countenance, the composed gait, and the gentle voice of her who in the garden sought and found her Risen Saviour. Such, too, was he who from a publican became an Apostle and an Evangelist; one who for filthy lucre scrupled not to enter the service of the heathen Romans, and to oppress his own people. Nor were the rest of the Apostles made of better clay than the other sons of Adam; they were by nature animal, carnal, ignorant; left to themselves, they would, like the brutes, have grovelled on the earth, and gazed upon the earth, and fed on the earth, had not the grace of God taken possession of them, and set them on their feet, and raised their faces heavenward. And such was the learned Pharisee, who came to Jesus by night, well satisfied with his station, jealous of his reputation, confident in his reason; but the time at length came, when, even though disciples fled, he remained to anoint the abandoned corpse of Him, whom when living he had been ashamed to own. You see it was the grace of God that triumphed in Magdalen, in Matthew, and in Nicodemus; heavenly grace came down upon corrupt nature; it subdued impurity in the youthful woman, covetousness in the publican, fear of man in the Pharisee.

Let me speak of another celebrated conquest of God's grace in an after age, and you will see how it pleases Him to make a Confessor, a Saint and Doctor of His Church, out of sin and heresy both together. It was not enough that the Father of the Western Schools, the author of a thousand works, the triumphant controversialist, the especial champion of grace, should have been once a poor slave of the flesh, but he was the victim of a perverted intellect also. He, who of all others, was to extol the grace of God, was left more than others to experience the helplessness of nature. The great St. Augustine (I am not speaking of the holy missionary of the same name, who came to England and converted our pagan forefathers, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury, but of the great African Bishop, two centuries before him)—Augustine, I say, not being in earnest about his soul, not asking himself the question, how was sin to be washed away, but rather being desirous, while youth and strength lasted, to enjoy the flesh and the world, ambitious and sensual judged of truth and falsehood by his private judgment and his private fancy; despised the Catholic Church because it spoke so much of faith and subjection, thought to make his own reason the measure of all things, and accordingly joined a far-spread sect, which affected to be philosophical and enlightened, to take large views of things, and to correct the vulgar, that is the Catholic notions of God and Christ, of sin, and of the way to heaven. In this sect of his he remained for some years; yet what he was taught there did not satisfy him. It pleased him for a time, and then he found he had been eating as if food what had no nourishment in it; he became hungry and thirsty after something more substantial, he knew not what; he despised himself for being a slave to the flesh, and he found his religion did not help him to overcome it; thus he understood that he had not gained the truth, and he cried out, "O, who will tell me where to seek it, and who will bring me into it?"

Why did he not join the Catholic Church at once? I have told you why; he saw that truth was nowhere else; but he was not sure it was there. He thought there was something mean, narrow, irrational, in her system of doctrine; he lacked the gift of faith. Then a great conflict began within him,—the conflict of nature with grace; of nature and her children, the flesh and false reason, against conscience and the pleadings of the Divine Spirit, leading him to better things. Though he was still in a state of perdition, yet God was visiting him, and giving him the first-fruits of those influences which were in the event to bring him out of it. Time went on; and looking at him, as his Guardian Angel might look at him, you would have said that, in spite of much perverseness, and many a successful struggle against his Almighty Adversary, in spite of his still being, as before, in a state of wrath, nevertheless grace was making way in his soul,—he was advancing toward the Church. He did not know it himself, he could not recognize it himself; but an eager interest in him, and then a joy, was springing up in heaven among the Angels of God. At last he came within the range of a great Saint in a foreign country; and, though he pretended not to acknowledge him, his attention was arrested by him, and he could not help coming to sacred places to look at him again and again. He began to watch him and speculate about him, and wondered with himself whether he was happy. He found himself frequently in church, listening to the holy preacher, and he once asked his advice how to find what he was seeking. And now a final conflict came on him with the flesh: it was hard, very hard, to part with the indulgences of years, it was hard to part and never to meet again. O, sin was so sweet, how could he bid it farewell? how could he tear himself away from its embrace, and betake himself to that lonely and dreary way which led heavenwards? But God's grace was sweeter far, and it convinced him while it won him: it convinced his reason, and prevailed; —and he who without it would have lived and died a child of Satan, became, under its wonder-working power, an oracle of sanctity and truth.

And do you not think, my brethren, that he was better fitted than another to persuade his brethren as he had been persuaded, and to preach the holy doctrine which he had despised? Not that sin is better than obedience, or the sinner than the just; but that God in His mercy makes use of sin against itself, that He turns past sin into a present benefit, that, while He washes away its guilt and subdues its power, He leaves it in the penitent in such sense as enables him, from his knowledge of its devices, to assault it more vigorously, and strike at it more truly, when it meets him in other men; that, while our Lord, by His omnipotent grace, can make the soul as clean as if it had never been unclean, He leaves it in possession of a tenderness and compassion for other sinners, an experience how to deal with them, greater than if it had never sinned; and again that, in those rare and special instances, of one of which I have been speaking, He holds up to us, for our instruction and our comfort, what He can do, even for the most guilty, if they sincerely come to Him for a pardon and a cure. There is no limit to be put to the bounty and power of God's grace; and that we feel sorrow for our sins, and supplicate His mercy, is a sort of present pledge to us in our hearts, that He will grant us the good gifts we are seeking. He can do what He will with the soul of man. He is infinitely more powerful than the foul spirit to whom the sinner has sold himself, and can cast him out.

O my dear brethren, though your conscience witnesses against you, He can disburden it; whether you have sinned less or whether you have sinned more, He can make you as clean in His sight and as acceptable to Him as if you had never gone from Him. Gradually will He destroy your sinful habits, and at once will He restore you to His favor. Such is the power of the Sacrament of Penance, that, be your load of guilt heavier or be it lighter, it removes it, whatever it is. It is as easy to Him to wash out the many sins as the few. Do you recollect in the Old Testament the history of the cure of Naaman the Syrian, by the prophet Eliseus? He had that dreadful, incurable disease called the leprosy, which was a white crust upon the skin, making the whole person hideous, and typifying the hideousness of sin. The prophet bade him bathe in the river Jordan, and the disease disappeared; "his flesh," says the inspired writer, was "restored to him as the flesh of a little child." Here, then, we have a representation not only of what sin is, but of what God's grace is. It can undo the past, it can realize the hopeless. No sinner, ever so odious, but may become a Saint; no Saint, ever so exalted, but has been, or might have been, a sinner. Grace overcomes nature, and grace only overcomes it. Take that holy child, the blessed St. Agnes, who, at the age of thirteen, resolved to die rather than deny the faith, and stood enveloped in an atmosphere of purity, and diffused around her a heavenly influence, in the very home of evil spirits into which the heathen brought her; or consider the angelical Aloysius, of whom it hardly is left upon record that he committed even a venial sin; or St. Agatha, St. Juliana, St. Rose, St. Casimir, or St. Stanislas, to whom the very notion of any unbecoming imagination had been as death; well, there is not one of these seraphic souls but might have been a degraded, loathsome leper, except for God's grace, an outcast from his kind; not one but might, or rather would, have lived the life of a brute creature, and died the death of a reprobate, and lain down in hell eternally in the devil's arms, had not God put a new heart and a new spirit within him, and made him what he could not make himself.

All good men are not Saints, my brethren—all converted souls do not become Saints. I will not promise, that, if you turn to God, you will reach that height of sanctity which the Saints have reached:—true; still, I am showing you that even the Saints are by nature no better than you; and so (much more) that the Priests, who have the charge of the faithful, whatever be their sanctity, are by nature no better than those whom they have to convert, whom they have to reform. It is God's special mercy toward you that we by nature are no other than you: it is His consideration and compassion for you that He has made us, who are your brethren, His legates and ministers of reconciliation.

This is what the world cannot understand; not that it does not apprehend clearly enough that we are by nature of like passions with itself; but what it is so blind, so narrow-minded as not to comprehend, is, that, being so like itself by nature, we may be made so different by grace. Men of the world, my brethren, know the power of nature; they know not, experience not, believe not, the power of God's grace; and since they are not themselves acquainted with any power that can overcome nature, they think that none exists, and therefore, consistently, they believe that every one, Priests or not, remains to the end such as nature made him, and they will not believe it possible that any one can lead a supernatural life. Now, not Priest only, but every one who is in the grace of God, leads a supernatural life, more or less supernatural, according to his calling, and the measure of the gifts given him, and his faithfulness to them. This they know not, and admit not; and when they hear of the life which a Priest must lead by his profession from youth to age, they will not credit that he is what he professes to be. They know nothing of the presence of God, the merits of Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin; the virtue of recurring prayers, of frequent confession, of daily Masses; they are strangers to the transforming power of the Most Holy Sacrament, the Bread of Angels; they do not contemplate the efficacy of salutary rules, of holy companions, of long-enduring habit, of ready spontaneous vigilance, of abhorrence of sin and indignation at the tempter, to secure the soul from evil.

They only know that when the tempter once has actually penetrated into the heart, he is irresistible; they only know that when the soul has exposed and surrendered itself to his malice, there is (so to speak) a necessity of sinning. They only know that when God has abandoned it, and good Angels are withdrawn, and all safeguards, and protections, and preventives are neglected, that then (which is their own case), when the victory is all but gained already, it is sure to be gained altogether. They themselves have ever, in their best estate, been all but beaten by the Evil One before they began to fight; this is the only state they have experienced; they know this, and they know nothing else. They have never stood on vantage ground; they have never been within the walls of the strong city, about which the enemy prowls in vain, into which he cannot penetrate, and outside of which the faithful soul will be too wise to venture. They judge, I say, by their experience, and will not believe what they never knew.

If there be those here present, my dear brethren, who will not believe that grace is effectual within the Church, because it does little outside of it, to them I do not speak: I speak to those who do not narrow their belief to their experience; I speak to those who admit that grace can make human nature what it is not; and such persons, I think, will feel it, not a cause of jealousy and suspicion, but a great gain, a great mercy, that those are sent to preach to them, to receive their confessions, and to advise them, who can sympathize with their sins, even though they have not known them. Not a temptation, my brethren, can befall you, but what befalls all those who share your nature, though you may have yielded to it, and they may not have yielded. They can understand you, they can anticipate you, they can interpret you, though they have not kept pace with you in your course. They will be tender to you, they will "instruct you in the spirit of meekness," as the Apostle says, "considering themselves lest they also be tempted." Come then unto us, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your souls; come unto us, who now stand to you in Christ's stead, and who speak in Christ's name; for we too, like you, have been saved by Christ's all-saving blood. We too, like you, should be lost sinners, unless Christ had had mercy on us, unless His grace had cleansed us, unless His Church had received us, unless His Saints had interceded for us. Be ye saved, as we have been saved; "come, listen, all ye that fear God, and we will tell you what He hath done for our souls." Listen to our testimony; behold our joy of heart, and increase it by partaking in it yourselves. Choose that good part which we have chosen; join ye yourselves to our company; it will never repent you, take our word for it, who have a right to speak, it will never repent you to have sought pardon and peace from the Catholic

Church, which alone has grace, which alone has power, which alone has Saints; it will never repent you, though you go through trouble, though you have to give up much for her sake. It will never repent you, to have passed from the shadows of sense and time, and the deceptions of human feeling and false reason, to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

And O, my brethren, when you have taken the great step, and stand in your blessed lot, as sinners reconciled to the Father you had offended (for I will anticipate, what I surely trust will be fulfilled as regards many of you), O then forget not those who have been the ministers of your reconciliation; and as they now pray you to make your peace with God, so do you, when reconciled, pray for them, that they may gain the great gift of perseverance, that they may continue to stand in the grace in which they trust they stand now, even till the hour of death, lest, perchance, after they have preached to others, they themselves become reprobate.

PURITY AND LOVE.

WE find two especial manifestations of divine grace in the human heart, whether we turn to Scripture for instances of it, or to the history of the Church; whether we trace it in the case of Saints, or in persons of holy and religious life; and the two are even found among our Lord's Apostles, being represented by the two foremost of that favored company, St. Peter and St. John. St. John is the Saint of purity, and St. Peter is the Saint of love. Not that love and purity can ever be separated; not as if a Saint had not all virtues in him at once; not as if St. Peter were not pure as well as loving, and St. John loving, for all he was so pure. The graces of the Spirit cannot be separated from each other; one implies the rest; what is love but a delight in God, a devotion to Him, a surrender of the whole self to Him? what is impurity, on the other hand, but the turning to something of this world, something sinful, as the object of our affections instead of God? What is it but a deliberate abandonment of the Creator for the creature, and seeking pleasure in the shadow of death, not in the all-blissful Presence of light and holiness? The impure then cannot love God; and those who are without love of God cannot really be pure. Purity prepares the soul for love, and love confirms the soul in purity. The flame of love will not be bright unless the substance which feeds it be pure and unadulterate; and the most dazzling purity is but as iciness and desolation unless it draws its life from fervent love.

Yet, certain as this is, it is certain also that the spiritual works of God show differently from each other to our eyes, and that they display, in their character and their history, some of them this virtue more than other virtues, and some that. In other words, it pleases the Giver of grace to endue His Saints specially with certain gifts, for His glory, which light up and beautify one particular portion or department of their souls, so as to cast their other excellences into the shade. And then this special gift of grace becomes their characteristic, and we put it first in our thoughts of them, and consider what they have besides, as included in it, or dependent upon it, and speak of them as if they had not the rest, though we know they really have them; and we give them some title or description taken from that particular grace which is so emphatically theirs. And in this way we may speak, as I intend to do in what I am going to say, of two chief classes of Saints, whose emblems are the lily and the rose, who are bright with angelic purity or who burn with divine love.

The two St. Johns are the great instances of the Angelic life. Whom, my brethren, can we conceive to have such majestic and severe sanctity as the Holy Baptist? He had a privilege which reached near upon the prerogative of the Most Blessed Mother of God; for, if she was conceived without sin, at least without sin he was born. She was all-pure, all-holy, and sin had no part in her: but St. John was in the beginning of his existence a partaker of Adam's curse: he lay under God's wrath, deprived of that grace which Adam had received, and which is the life and strength of human nature. Yet, as soon as Christ, his Lord and Saviour, came to him, and Mary saluted his own mother, Elizabeth, forthwith the grace of God was given to him, and the original guilt was wiped away from his soul. And therefore it is that we celebrate the nativity of St. John; nothing unholy does the Church celebrate; not St. Peter's birth, nor St. Paul's, nor St. Augustine's, nor St. Gregory's, nor St. Bernard's, nor St. Aloysius's, nor the nativity of any other Saint, however glorious, because they were all born in sin. She celebrates their conversions, their prerogatives, their martyrdoms, their deaths, their translations, but not their birth, because in no case was it holy. Three nativities alone does she commemorate, our Lord's, His Mother's, and lastly, St. John's. What a special gift was this, my brethren, separating the Baptist off, and distinguishing him from all prophets and preachers, who ever lived, however holy, except perhaps the prophet Jeremias! And such as was his commencement, was the course of his life. He was carried away by the Spirit into the desert, and there he lived on the simplest fare, in the rudest clothing, in the caves of wild beasts, apart from men, for thirty years, leading a life of mortification and of prayer, till he was called to preach penance, to proclaim the Christ, and to baptize Him; and then having done his work, and having left no act of sin on record, he was laid aside as an instrument which had lost its use, and languished in prison, till he was suddenly cut off by the sword of the executioner. Sanctity is the one idea of him impressed upon us from first to last; a most marvellous Saint, a hermit from his childhood, then a preacher to a fallen people, and then a Martyr. Surely such a life fulfils that expectation concerning him which follows on Mary's salutation of his mother before his birth.

Yet still more beautiful, and almost as majestic, is the image of his namesake, that great Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet of the Church, who came so early into our Lord's chosen company, and lived so long after all his fellows. We can contemplate him in his youth and in his venerable age; and on his whole life, from first to last, as his special gift, is marked purity. He is the virgin Apostle, who on that account was so dear to his Lord, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who lay on His Bosom, who received His Mother from Him when upon the Cross, who had the vision of all the wonders which were to come to pass in the world to the end of time. "Greatly to be honored," says the Church, "is blessed John, who on the Lord's Breast lay at supper, to whom, a virgin, did Christ on the Cross commit His Virgin Mother. He was chosen a virgin by the Lord and was more beloved than the rest. The special prerogative of chastity had made him meet for his Lord's larger love, because, being chosen by Him a virgin, a virgin he remained unto the end." He it was who in his youth professed his readiness to drink Christ's chalice with Him; who wore away a long life as a desolate stranger in a foreign land; who was at length carried to Rome and plunged into the hot oil, and then was banished to a far island, till his days drew near their close.

O how impossible it is worthily to conceive of the sanctity of these two great servants of God, so different is their whole history, in their lives and in their deaths, yet agreeing together in their seclusion from the world, in their tranquillity, and in their all but sinlessness! Mortal sin had never touched them, and we may well believe that even from deliberate venial sin they were ever exempt; nay, that at particular seasons or on certain occasions they did not sin at all. The rebellion of the reason, the waywardness of the feelings, the disorder of the thoughts, the fever of passion, the treachery of the senses, these evils did the all-powerful grace of God subdue in them. They lived in a world of their own, uniform, serene, abiding; in visions of peace, in communion with heaven, in anticipation of glory; and, if they spoke to the world without, as preachers or as confessors, they spoke as from some sacred shrine, not mixing with men while they addressed them, as "a voice crying in the wilderness" or "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." And therefore it is we speak of them rather as patterns of sanctity than of love, because love regards an external object, runs toward it and labors for it whereas such Saints came so close to the Object of their love, they were granted so to receive Him into their breasts, and so to make themselves one with Him, that their hearts did not so much love heaven as were themselves a heaven, did not so much see light as were light; and they lived among men as those Angels in the old time, who came to the patriarchs and spake as though they were God, for God was in them, and spake by them. Thus these two were almost absorbed in the Godhead, living an angelical life, as far as man could lead one, so calm, so still, so raised above sorrow and fear, disappointment and regret, desire and aversion, as to be the most perfect images that earth has seen of the peace and immutability of God. Such too are the many virgin Saints whom history records for our veneration, St. Joseph, the great St. Antony, St. Cecilia who was waited on by Angels, St. Nicolas of Bari, St. Peter Celestine, St. Rose of Viterbo, St. Catharine of Sienna, and a host of others, and above all, the Virgin of Virgins, and Queen of Virgins, the Blessed Mary, who, though replete and overflowing with the grace of love, yet for the very reason that she was the "seat of wisdom," and the "ark of the covenant," is more commonly represented under the emblem of the lily than of the rose.

But now, my brethren, let us turn to the other class of Saints. I have been speaking of those who in a wonderful, sometimes in a miraculous way, have been defended from sin, and conducted from strength to strength, from youth till death; but now suppose it has been the will of God to shed the light and power of His Spirit upon those who have misused the talents, and quenched the grace already given them, and who therefore have a host of evils within them of which they are to be dispossessed, who are under the dominion of obstinate habits, indulged passions, false opinions; who have served Satan, not as infants before their baptism, but with their will, with their reason, with their faculties responsible, and their hearts alive and conscious. Is He to draw these elect souls to Him without themselves, or by means of themselves? Is He to change them at His word, as He created them, as He will make them die, as He will raise them from the grave, or is He to enter into their souls, to address Himself to them, to persuade them, and so to win them? Doubtless He might have been urgent with them, and masterful; He might by a blessed violence have come upon them, and so turned them into Saints; He might have superseded any process of conversion, and out of the very stones have raised up children to Abraham. But He has willed otherwise; else, why did He manifest Himself on earth? Why did He surround Himself on His coming with so much that was touching and attractive and subduing? Why did He bid His angels proclaim that He was to be seen as a little infant, in a manger and in a Virgin's bosom, at Bethlehem? Why did He go about doing good? Why did He die in public, before the world, with His mother and His beloved disciple by Him? Why does He now tell us how He is exalted in Heaven with a host of glorified Saints, who are our intercessors, about His throne? Why does He give us His own Mother Mary for our mother, the most perfect image after Himself of what is beautiful and tender, and gentle and soothing, in human nature? Why does He manifest Himself by an ineffable condescension on our Altars, still humbling Himself, though He reigns on high? What does all this show, but that, when souls wander away from Him, He reclaims them by means of themselves, "by cords of Adam," or of human nature, as the prophet speaks,—conquering us indeed at His will, saving us in spite of ourselves,--and yet by ourselves, so that the very reason and affections of the old Adam, which have been made "the instruments of iniquity unto sin," should, under the power of His grace, become "the instruments of justice unto God"?

Yes, doubtless He draws us "by cords of Adam," and what are those cords, but, as the prophet speaks in the same verse, "the cords," or "the twine of love"? It is the manifestation of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ; it is that view of the attributes and perfections of Almighty God; it is the beauty of His sanctity, the sweetness of His mercy, the brightness of His heaven, the majesty of His law, the harmony of His providences, the thrilling music of His voice, which is the antagonist of the flesh, and the soul's champion against the world and the devil. "Thou hast seduced me, O Lord," says the prophet, "and I was seduced; Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed"; Thou hast thrown Thy net skilfully, and its subtle threads are entwined round each affection of my heart, and its meshes have been a power of God, "bringing into captivity the whole intellect to the service of Christ." If the world has its fascinations, so surely has the Altar of the living God; if its pomps and vanities dazzle, so much more should the vision of Angels ascending and descending on the heavenly ladder; if sights of earth intoxicate, and its music is a spell upon the soul, behold Mary pleads with us, over against them, with her chaste eyes, and offers the Eternal Child for our caress, while sounds of cherubim are heard all round singing from out the fulness of the Divine Glory. Has divine hope no emotion? Has divine charity no transport? "How dear are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" says the prophet; "my soul doth lust, and doth faint for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. Better is one day in Thy courts above a thousand: I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners."

So is it, as a great Doctor and penitent has said, St. Augustine: "It is not enough to be drawn by the will; thou art also drawn by the sense of pleasure. What is it to be drawn by pleasure? 'Delight thou in the Lord, and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart.' There is a certain pleasure of heart, when that heavenly Bread is sweet to a man. Moreover, if the poet saith, 'Every one is drawn by his own pleasure,' not by necessity, but by pleasure; not by obligation, but by delight; how much more boldly ought we to say, that man is drawn to Christ, when he is delighted with truth, delighted with bliss, delighted with justice, delighted with eternal life, all which is Christ? Have the bodily senses their pleasures, and is the mind without its own? If so, whence is it said, 'The sons of men shall hope under the covering of Thy wings; they shall be intoxicate with the richness of Thy house, and with the torrent of Thy pleasure shalt thou give them to drink: for with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light we shall see light'? 'He, whom the Father draweth, cometh to Me'?" he continues: "Whom hath the Father drawn? him who said, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.' You present a green branch to the sheep, and you draw it forward; fruits are offered to the child, and he is drawn; in that he runs, he is drawn, he is drawn by loving, drawn without bodily hurt, drawn by the bond of the heart. If then it be true that the sight of earthly delight draws on the lover, doth not Christ too draw us when revealed by the Father? For what doth the soul desire more strongly than truth?"

Such are the means which God has provided for the creation of the Saint out of the sinner; He takes him as he is, and uses him against himself: He turns his affections into another channel, and extinguishes a carnal love by infusing a heavenly charity. Not as if He used him as a mere irrational creature, who is impelled by instincts and governed by external incitements without any will of his own, and to whom one pleasure is the same as another, the same in kind, though different in degree. I have already said, it is the very triumph of His grace, that He enters into the heart of man, and persuades it, and prevails with it, while He changes it. He violates in nothing that original constitution of mind which He gave to man: He treats him as man; He leaves him the liberty of acting this way or that; He appeals to all his powers and faculties, to his reason, to his prudence, to his moral sense, to his conscience: He rouses his fears as well as his love; He instructs him in the depravity of sin, as well as in the mercy of God; but still, on the whole, the animating principle of the new life, by which it is both kindled and sustained, is the flame of charity. This only is strong enough to destroy the old Adam, to dissolve the tyranny of habit, to quench the fires of concupiscence, and to burn up the strongholds of pride.

And hence it is that love is presented to us as the distinguishing grace of those who were sinners before they were Saints; not that love is not the life of all Saints, of those who have never needed a conversion, of the Most Blessed Virgin, of the two St. Johns, and of those others, many in number, who are "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb"; but that, while in those who have never sinned gravely, love is so contemplative as almost to resolve itself into the sanctity of God Himself; in those, on the contrary, in whom it dwells as a principle of recovery, it is so full of devotion, of zeal, of activity, and good works, that it gives a visible character to their history, and is ever associating itself with our thoughts of them.

Such was the great Apostle, on whom the Church is built, and whom I contrasted, when I began, with his fellow-Apostle St. John: whether we contemplate him after his first calling, or on his repentance, he who denied his Lord, out of all the Apostles, is the most conspicuous for his love of Him. It was for this love of Christ, flowing on, as it did, from its impetuosity and exuberance, into love of the brethren, that he was chosen to be the chief Pastor of the fold. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" was the trial put on him by his Lord; and the reward was, "Feed my lambs; Feed my sheep." Wonderful to say, the Apostle whom Jesus loved, was yet surpassed in love for Jesus by a brother Apostle, not virginal as he; for it is not John of whom our Lord asked this question, and who was rewarded with this commission, but Peter.

Look back at an earlier passage of the same narrative; there, too, the two Apostles are similarly contrasted in their respective characters; for when they were in the boat, and their Lord spoke to them from the shore, and "they knew not that it was Jesus," first "that disciple, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, It is the Lord," for "the clean of heart shall see God"; and then at once "Simon Peter," in the impetuosity of his love, "girt his tunic about him, and cast himself into the sea," to reach Him the quicker. St. John beholds and St. Peter acts.

Thus the very presence of Jesus enkindled Peter's heart, and at once drew him unto Him; also at a former time, when he saw his Lord walking on the sea, his very first impulse was, as in the passage to which I have been referring, to leave the vessel and hasten to His side: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters." And when he had been betrayed into his great sin, the very Eye of Jesus brought him to himself: "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and he went out and wept bitterly." Hence, on another occasion, when many of the disciples fell away, and "Jesus said to the twelve, Do you too wish to go away?" St. Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art Christ, the Son of God."

Such, too, was that other great Apostle, who, in so many ways, is associated with St. Peter—the Doctor of the Gentiles. He indeed was converted miraculously, by our Lord's appearing to him, when he was on his way to carry death to the Christians of Damascus: but how does he speak? "Whether we are beside ourselves," he says, "it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you: for the charity of Christ constraineth us. If, therefore, any be a new creature in Christ, old things have passed away, behold all things are made new." And so again: "With Christ am I nailed to the cross; but I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And again: "I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace in me hath not been void, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." And once more: "Whether we live, unto the Lord we live; whether we die, unto the Lord we die; whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." You see, my brethren, the character of St. Paul's love; it was a love fervent, eager, energetic, active, full of great works, "strong as death," as the inspired Word says, a flame which "many waters could not quench, nor the streams drown," which lasted to the end, when he could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me the crown of justice, which the Lord will render to me at that day, the just Judge."

And there is a third, my brethren, there is an illustrious third in Scripture, whom we must associate with these two great Apostles, when we speak of the saints of penance and love. Who is it but the loving Magdalen? Who is it so fully instances what I am showing, as "the woman who was a sinner," who watered the Lord's feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair, and anointed them with precious ointment? What a time for such an act! She, who had come into the room, as if for a festive purpose, to go about an act of penance! It was a formal banquet, given by a rich Pharisee, to honor, yet to try, our Lord. Magdalen came, young and beautiful, and "rejoicing in her youth," "walking in the ways of her heart and the gaze of her eyes": she came as if to honor that feast, as women were wont to honor such festive doings, with her sweet odors and cool unguents for the forehead and hair of the guests. And he, the proud Pharisee, suffered her to come, so that she touched not him; let her come as we might suffer inferior animals to enter our apartments, without caring for them; perhaps suffered her as a necessary embellishment of the entertainment, yet as having no soul, or as destined to perdition, but anyhow as nothing to him. He, proud being, and his brethren like him, might "compass sea and land to make one proselyte"; but, as to looking into that proselyte's heart, pitying its sin, and trying to heal it, this did not enter into the circuit of his thoughts. No, he thought only of the necessities of his banquet, and he let her come to do her part, such as it was, careless what her life was, so that she did that part well, and confined herself to it. But, lo, a wondrous sight! was it a sudden inspiration, or a mature resolve? was it an act of the moment, or the result of a long conflict?—but behold, that poor, many-colored child of guilt approaches to crown with her sweet ointment the head of Him to whom the feast was given; and see, she has stayed her hand. She has looked, and she discerns the Immaculate, the Virgin's Son, "the brightness of the Eternal Light, and the spotless mirror of God's majesty." She looks, and she recognizes the Ancient of Days, the Lord of life and death, her Judge; and again she looks, and she sees in His face and in His mien a beauty, and a sweetness, awful, serene, majestic, more than that of the sons of men, which paled all the splendor of that festive room. Again she looks, timidly yet eagerly, and she discerns in His eye, and in His smile, the loving-kindness, the tenderness, the compassion, the mercy of the Saviour of man. She looks at herself, and oh! how vile, how hideous is she, who but now was so vain of her attractions!—how withered is that comeliness, of which the praises ran through the mouths of her admirers!—how loathsome has become the breath, which hitherto she thought so fragrant, savoring only of those seven bad spirits which dwell within her! And there she would have stayed, there she would have sunk on the earth, wrapped in her confusion and in her despair, had she not cast one glance again on that all-loving, all-forgiving Countenance. He is looking at her: it is the Shepherd looking at the lost sheep, and the lost sheep surrenders herself to Him. He speaks not, but He eyes her; and she draws nearer to Him. Rejoice, ye Angels, she draws near, seeing nothing but Him, and caring neither for the scorn of the proud, nor the jests of the profligate. She draws near, not knowing whether she shall be saved or not, not knowing whether she shall be received, or what will become of her; this only knowing that He is the Fount of holiness and truth, as of mercy, and to whom should she go, but to Him who hath the words of eternal life? "Destruction is thine own, O Israel; in me only is thy help. Return unto me, and I will not turn away my face from thee: for I am holy, and will not be angry forever." "Behold we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God. Truly the hills are false, and the multitude of the mountains: Truly the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Wonderful meeting between what was most base and what is most pure! Those wanton hands, those polluted lips, have touched, have kissed the feet of the Eternal, and He shrank not from the homage. And as she hung over them, and as she moistened them from her full eyes, how did her love for One so great, yet so gentle, wax vehement within her, lighting up a flame which never was to die from that moment even forever? and what excess did it reach, when He recorded before all men her forgiveness, and the cause of it! "Many sins are forgiven her, for she loved much; but to whom less is forgiven, the same loveth less. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace."

Henceforth, my brethren, love was to her, as to St. Augustine and to

St. Ignatius Loyola afterward (great penitents in their own time), as a wound in the soul, so full of desire as to become anguish. She could not live out of the presence of Him in whom her joy lay: her spirit languished after Him, when she saw Him not; and waited on Him silently, reverently, wistfully, when she was in His blissful Presence. We read of her (if it was she), on one occasion, sitting at His feet to hear His words, and of His testifying that she had chosen that best part which should not be taken away from her. And, after His resurrection, she, by her perseverance, merited to see Him even before the Apostles. She would not leave the sepulchre, when Peter and John retired, but stood without, weeping; and when the Lord appeared to her, and held her eyes that she should not know Him, she said piteously to the supposed keeper of the garden, "Tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." And when at length He made Himself known to her, she turned herself, and rushed impetuously to embrace His feet, as at the beginning, but He, as if to prove the dutifulness of her love, forbade her: "Touch me not," He said, ' for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." And so she was left to long for the time when she should see Him, and hear His voice, and enjoy His smile, and be allowed to minister to Him, forever in heaven.

Such then is the second great class of Saints, as viewed in contrast with the first. Love is the life of both: but while the love of the innocent is calm and serene, the love of the penitent is ardent and impetuous, commonly engaged in contest with the world, and active in good works. And this is the love which you, my brethren, must have in your measure, if you would have a good hope of salvation. For you were once sinners; either by open and avowed contempt of religion, or by secret transgression, or by carelessness and coldness, or by some indulged bad habit, or by setting your heart on some object of this world, and doing your own will instead of God's, I think I may say you have needed, or now need, a reconciliation to Him. You have needed, or you need, to be brought near to Him, and to have your sins washed away in His blood, and your pardon recorded in Heaven. And what will do this for you, but contrition? and what is contrition without love? I do not say that you must have the love which Saints have, in order to your forgiveness, the love of St. Peter or of St. Mary Magdalen; but still without your portion of that same heavenly grace, how can you be forgiven at all? If you would do works meet for penance, they must proceed from a living flame of charity. If you would secure perseverance to the end, you must gain it by continual loving prayer to the Author and Finisher of faith and obedience. If you would have a good prospect of His acceptance of you in your last moments, still it is love alone which secures His love, and blots out sin. My brethren, at that awful hour you may be unable to obtain the last Sacraments; death may come on you suddenly, or you may be at a distance from a Priest. You may be thrown on yourselves, simply on your own compunction of heart, your own repentance, your own resolutions of amendment. You may have been weeks and weeks at a distance from spiritual aid; you may have to meet your God without the safeguard, the compensation, the mediation of any holy rite; and oh! what will save you at such disadvantage, but the exercise of divine love "poured over your hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to you"? At that hour nothing but a firm habit of charity which has kept you from mortal sins, or a powerful act of charity which blots them out, will be of any avail to you. Nothing but charity can enable you to live well or to die well. How can you bear to lie down at night, how can you bear to go a journey, how can you bear the presence of pestilence, or the attack of ever so slight an indisposition, if you are ill provided in yourselves with divine love against that change, which will come on you some day, yet when and how you know not? Alas! how will you present yourselves before the judgment-seat of Christ, with the imperfect mixed feelings which now satisfy you, with a certain amount of faith, and trust, and fear of God's judgments, but with nothing of that real delight in Him, in His attributes, in His will, in His commandments, in His service, which Saints possess in such fulness, and which alone can give the soul a comfortable title to the merits of His death and passion?

How different is the feeling with which the loving soul, on its separation from the body, approaches the judgment-seat of its Redeemer! It knows how great a debt of punishment remains upon it, though it has for many years been reconciled to Him; it knows that purgatory lies before it, and that the best it can reasonably hope for is to be sent there. But to see His face, though for a moment! to hear His voice, to hear Him speak, though it be to punish! O Saviour of men, it says, I come to Thee, though it be in order to be at once remanded from Thee; I come to Thee who art my Life and my All; I come to Thee on the thought of whom I have lived all my life long. To Thee I gave myself when first I had to take a part in the world; I sought Thee for my chief good early, for early didst Thou teach me, that good elsewhere there was none. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? whom have I desired on earth, whom have I had on earth, but Thee? whom shall I have amid the sharp flame but Thee? Yea, though I be now descending thither, into "a land desert, pathless and without water," I will fear no ill, for Thou art with me. I have seen Thee this day face to face, and it sufficeth; I have seen Thee, and that glance of Thine is sufficient for a century of sorrow, in the nether prison. I will live on that look of Thine, though I see Thee not, till I see Thee again, never to part from Thee. That eye of Thine shall be sunshine and comfort to my weary, longing soul; that voice of Thine shall be everlasting music in my ears. Nothing can harm me, nothing shall discompose me: I will bear the appointed years, till the end comes, bravely and sweetly. I will raise my voice, and chant a perpetual *Confiteor* to Thee and to Thy Saints in that dreary valley;—"to God Omnipotent, and to the Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin," (Thy Mother and mine, immaculate in her conception), "and to blessed Michael Archangel," (created in his purity by the very hand of God), and "to Blessed John Baptist," (sanctified even in his mother's womb); and after these three, "to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul," (penitents, who compassionate the sinner from their experience of sin); "to all Saints," (whether they have lived in contemplation or in toil, during the days of their pilgrimage), to all Saints will I address my supplication, that they may "remember me, since it is well with them, and do mercy by me, and make mention of me unto the King that He bring me out of prison." And then at length "God shall wipe away every tear from my eyes, and death shall be no longer, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things are passed away"

SAINTLINESS THE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE.

YOU know very well, my brethren, and there are few persons anywhere who deny it, that in the breast of every one there dwells a feeling or perception, which tells him the difference between right and wrong, and is the standard by which to measure thoughts and actions. It is called conscience; and even though it be not at all times powerful enough to rule us, still it is distinct and decisive enough to influence our views and form our judgments in the various matters which come before us. Yet even this office it cannot perform adequately without external assistance; it needs to be regulated and sustained. Left to itself, though it tells truly at first, it soon becomes wavering, ambiguous, and false; it needs good teachers and good examples to keep it up to the mark and line of duty; and the misery is, that these external helps, teachers, and examples are in many instances wanting.

Nay, to the great multitude of men they are so far wanting that conscience loses its way and guides the soul in its journey heavenward but indirectly and circuitously. Even in countries called Christian, the natural inward light grows dim, because the Light, which lightens every one born into the world, is removed out of sight. I say, it is a most miserable and frightful thought, that, in this country, among this people which boasts that it is so Christian and so enlightened, the sun in the heavens is so eclipsed that the mirror of conscience can catch and reflect few rays, and serves but poorly and scantily to preserve the foot from error. That inward light, given as it is by God, is powerless to illuminate the horizon, to mark out for us our direction, and to comfort us with the certainty that we are making for our Eternal Home. That light was intended to set up within us a standard of right and of truth; to tell us our duty on every emergency, to instruct us in detail what sin is, to judge between all things which come before us, to discriminate the precious from the vile, to hinder us from being seduced by what is pleasant and agreeable, and to dissipate the sophisms of our reason. But, alas! what ideas of truth, what ideas of holiness, what ideas of heroism, what ideas of the good and great, have the multitude of men? I am not asking whether they act up to any ideas, or are swayed by any ideas, of these high objects; that is a further point; I only ask, have they any ideas of them at all? or, if they cannot altogether blot out from their souls their ideas of greatness and goodness, I ask still, whether their mode of conceiving of them, and the things and persons in which they embody them, be not such, that we may truly say of the bulk of mankind, that "the light that is in them is darkness."

Attend to me, my dear brethren, I am saying nothing very abstruse, nothing very difficult to understand, nothing unimportant; but something intelligible, undeniable, and of very general concern. You know there are persons who never see the light of day; they live in pits and mines, and there they work, there they take their pleasure, and there perhaps they die. Do you think they have any right idea, though they have eyes, of the sun's radiance, of the sun's warmth? any idea of the beautiful arching heavens, the blue sky, the soft clouds, and the moon and stars by night? any idea of the high mountain and the green smiling earth? O what an hour it is for him who is suddenly brought from such a pit or cave, from the dull red glow and the flickering glare of torches, and that monotony of an artificial twilight, in which day and night are lost,—is suddenly, I say, brought thence, and for the first time sees the bright sun moving majestically from east to west, and witnesses the gradual, graceful changes of the air and sky from morn till fragrant evening! And O what a sight for one born blind to begin to see,—a sense altogether foreign to all his previous conceptions! What a marvellous new state of being, which, though he ever had the senses of hearing and of touch, never had he been able, by the words of others, or any means of information he possessed, to bring home to himself in the faintest measure! Would he not find himself, as it is said, in a "new world"? What a revolution would take place in his modes of thought, in his habits, in his ways, and in his doings hour by hour! He would no longer direct himself with his hands and his hearing, he would no longer grope about; he would see;—he would at a glance take in ten thousand objects, and, what is more, their relations and their positions the one toward the other. He would know what was great and what was little, what was near, what was distant, what things converged together, and what things were ever separate—in a word, he would see all things as a whole, and in subjection to himself as a centre.

But further, he would gain knowledge of something closer to himself and more personal than all these various objects; of something very different from the forms and groups in which light dwelt as in a tabernacle, and which excited his admiration and love. He would discover lying upon him, spreading over him, penetrating him, the festering seeds of unhealthiness and disease in their primary and minutest forms. The air around us is charged with a subtle powder or dust, which falls down softly on everything, silently sheds itself on everything, soils and stains everything, and, if suffered to remain undisturbed, induces sickness and engenders pestilence. It is like those ashes of the furnace which Moses was instructed to take up and scatter in the face of heaven, that they might become ulcers and blisters upon the flesh of the Egyptians. This subtle plague is felt in its ultimate consequences by all, the blind as well as those who see; but it is by the eyesight that we discern it in its origin and in its progress; it is by the sun's light that we discern our own defilement, and the need we have of continual cleansing to rid ourselves of it.

Now what is this dust and dirt, my brethren, but a figure of sin? so subtle in its approach, so multitudinous in its array, so incessant in its solicitations, so insignificant in its appearance, so odious, so poisonous in its effects. It falls on the soul gently and imperceptibly; but it gradually breeds wounds and sores, and ends in everlasting death. And as we cannot see the atoms of dust that have settled on us without the light, and as that same light, which enables us to see them, teaches us withal, by their very contrast with itself, their unseemliness and dishonor, so the light of the invisible world, the teachings and examples of revealed truth, bring home to us both the existence and also the deformity of sin, of which we should be unmindful or forgetful without them. And as there are men who live in caverns and mines, and never see the face of day, and do their work as best they can by torchlight, so there are multitudes, nay, whole races of men, who, though possessed of eyes by nature, cannot use them duly, because they live in the spiritual pit, in the region of darkness, "in the land of wretchedness and gloom, where there is the shadow of death, and where order is not."

There they are born, there they live, there they die; and instead of the bright, broad, and all-revealing luminousness of the sun, they grope their way from place to place with torches, as best they may, or fix up lamps at certain points, and "walk in the light of their fire, and in the flames which they have kindled"; because they have nothing clearer, nothing purer, to serve the needs of the day and the year. Light of some kind they must secure, and, when they can do no better, they make it for themselves. Man, a being endued with reason, cannot on that very account live altogether at random; he is obliged in some sense to live on principle, to live by rule, to profess a view of life, to have an aim, to set up a standard, and to take to him such examples as seem to him to fulfil it. His reason does not make him independent (as men sometimes speak); it forces on him a dependency on definite principles and laws, in order to satisfy its own demands. He must, by the necessity of his nature, look up to something; and he creates, if he cannot discover, an object for his veneration. He teaches himself, or is taught by his neighbor, falsehoods, if he is not taught truth from above; he makes to himself idols, if he knows not of the Eternal God and His Saints. Now, of which of the two, think you, my brethren, are our own countrymen in possession? have they possession of the true Object of worship, or have they a false one? have they created what is not, or discovered what is? do they walk by the luminaries of heaven, or are they as those who are born and live in caverns, and who strike their light as best they may, by means of the stones and metals of the earth?

Look around, my brethren, and answer for yourselves. Contemplate the objects of this people's praise, survey their standards, ponder their ideas and judgments, and then tell me whether it is not most evident, from their very notion of the desirable and the excellent, that greatness, and goodness, and sanctity, and sublimity, and truth are unknown to them; and that they not only do not pursue, but do not even admire, those high attributes of the Divine Nature. *This* is what I am insisting on, not what they actually do or what they are, but what they revere, what they adore, what their gods are. Their god is mammon; I do not mean to say that all seek to be wealthy, but that all bow down before wealth. Wealth is that to which the multitude of men pay an instinctive homage. They measure happiness by wealth; and by wealth they measure respectability. Numbers, I say, there are who never dream that they shall ever be rich themselves, but who still at the sight of wealth feel an involuntary reverence and awe, just as if a rich man must be a good man. They like to be noticed by some particular rich man; they like on some occasion to have spoken with him; they like to know those who know him, to be intimate with his dependents, to have entered his house, nay, to know him by sight. Not, I repeat, that it ever comes into their mind that the like wealth will one day be theirs; not that they *see* the wealth, for the man who has it may dress, and live, and look like other men; not that they expect to gain some benefit from it: no, theirs is a disinterested homage, it is a homage resulting from an honest, genuine, hearty admiration of wealth for its own sake, such as that pure love which holy men feel for the Maker of all; it is a homage resulting from a profound faith in wealth, from the intimate sentiment of their hearts, that, however a man may look,—poor, mean, starved, decrepit, vulgar; or again, though he may be ignorant, or diseased, or feeble-minded, though he have the character of being a tyrant or a profligate, yet, if he be rich, he differs from all others; if he be rich, he has a gift, a spell, an omnipotence;—that with wealth he may do all things.

Wealth is one idol of the day, and notoriety is a second. I am not speaking, I repeat, of what men actually pursue, but of what they look up to, what they revere. Men may not have the opportunity of pursuing what they admire still. Never could notoriety exist as it does now, in any former age of the world; now that the news of the hour from all parts of the world, private news as well as public, is brought day by day to every individual, as I may say, of the community, to the poorest artisan and the most secluded peasant, by processes so uniform, so unvarying, so spontaneous, that they almost bear the semblance of a natural law. And hence notoriety, or the making a noise in the world, has come to be considered a great good in itself, and a ground of veneration. Time was when men could only make a display by means of expenditure; and the world used to gaze with wonder on those who had large establishments, many servants, many horses, richly furnished houses, gardens, and parks: it does so still, that is, when it has the opportunity of doing so: for such magnificence is the fortune of the few, and comparatively few are its witnesses. Notoriety, or, as it may be called, newspaper fame, is to the many what style and fashion, to use the language of the world, are to those who are within or belong to the higher circles; it becomes to them a sort of idol, worshipped for its own sake, and without any reference to the shape in which it comes before them. It may be an evil fame or a good fame; it may be the notoriety of a great statesman, or of a great preacher, or of a great speculator, or of a great experimentalist, or of a great criminal; of one who has labored in the improvement of our schools, or hospitals, or prisons, or workhouses, or of one who has robbed his neighbor of his wife. It matters not; so that a man is talked much of, and read much of, he is thought much of; nay, let him even have died justly under the hands of the law, still he will be made a sort of martyr of. His clothes, his handwriting, the circumstances of his guilt, the instruments of his deed of blood, will be shown about, gazed on, treasured up as so many relics; for the question with men is, not whether he is great, or good, or wise, or holy; not whether he is base, and vile, and odious, but whether he is in the mouths of men, whether he has centred on himself the attention of many, whether he has done something out of the way, whether he has been (as it were) canonized in the publications of the hour. All men cannot be notorious: the multitudes who thus honor notoriety, do not seek it themselves; nor am I speaking of what men do, but how they judge; yet instances do occur from time to time of wretched men, so smitten with passion for notoriety, as even to dare in fact some detestable and wanton act, not from love of it, not from liking or dislike of the person against whom it is directed, but simply in order thereby to gratify this impure desire of being talked about, and gazed upon. "These are thy gods, O Israel!" Alas! alas! this great and noble people, born to aspire, born for reverence, behold them walking to and fro by the torch-light of the cavern, or pursuing the wild-fires of the marsh, not understanding themselves, their destinies, their defilements, their needs, because they have not the glorious luminaries of heaven to see, to consult, and to admire!

But O! what a change, my brethren, when the good hand of God brings them by some marvellous providence to the pit's mouth, and then out into the blessed light of day! what a change for them when they first begin to see with the eyes of the soul, with the intuition which grace gives, Jesus, the Sun of Justice; and the heaven of Angels and Archangels in which He dwells; and the bright Morning Star, which is His Blessed Mother; and the continual floods of light falling and striking against the earth, and transformed, as they fall, into an infinity of hues, which are His Saints; and the boundless sea, which is the image of His divine immensity; and then again the calm, placid Moon by night, which images His Church; and the silent stars, like good and holy men, travelling on in lonely pilgrimage to their eternal rest! Such was the surprise, such the transport, which came upon the favored disciples, whom on one occasion our Lord took up with Him to the mountain's top. He left the sick world, the tormented, restless multitude, at its foot, and He took them up, and was transfigured before them. "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light"; and they lifted their eyes, and saw on either side of Him a bright form;—these were two Saints of the elder covenant, Moses and Elias, who were conversing with Him. How truly was this a glimpse of Heaven! the holy Apostles were introduced into a new range of ideas, into a new sphere of contemplation, till St. Peter, overcome by the vision, cried out, "Lord, it is good to be here; and let us make three tabernacles." He would fain have kept those heavenly glories always with him; everything on earth, the brightest, the fairest, the noblest, paled and dwindled away, and turned to corruption before them; its most substantial good was vanity, its richest gain was dross, its keenest joy a weariness, and its sin a loathsomeness and abomination. And such as this in its measure is the contrast, to which the awakened soul is witness, between the objects of its admiration and pursuit in its natural state, and those which burst upon it when it has entered into communion with the Church Invisible, when it has come "to Mount Sion, and to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to a company of many thousand Angels, and to the Church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just now perfected, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament." From that day it has begun a new life: I am not speaking of any moral conversion which takes place in it; whether or not it is moved (as surely we believe it will be) to act upon the sights which it sees, still consider only what a change there will be in its views and estimation of things, as soon as it has heard and has faith in the word of God, as soon as it understands that wealth, and notoriety, and influence, and high place, are not the first of blessings and the real standard of good; but that saintliness and all its attendants,—saintly purity, saintly poverty, heroic fortitude and patience, self-sacrifice for the sake of others, renouncement of the world, the favor of Heaven, the protection of Angels, the smile of the Blessed Virgin, the gifts of grace, the interpositions of miracle, the intercommunion of merits,—that these are the high and precious things, the things to be looked up to, the things to be reverently spoken of. Hence worldly-minded men, however rich, if they are Catholics, cannot, till they utterly lose their faith, be the same as those who are external to the Church; they have an instinctive veneration for those who have the traces of heaven upon them, and they praise what they do not imitate.

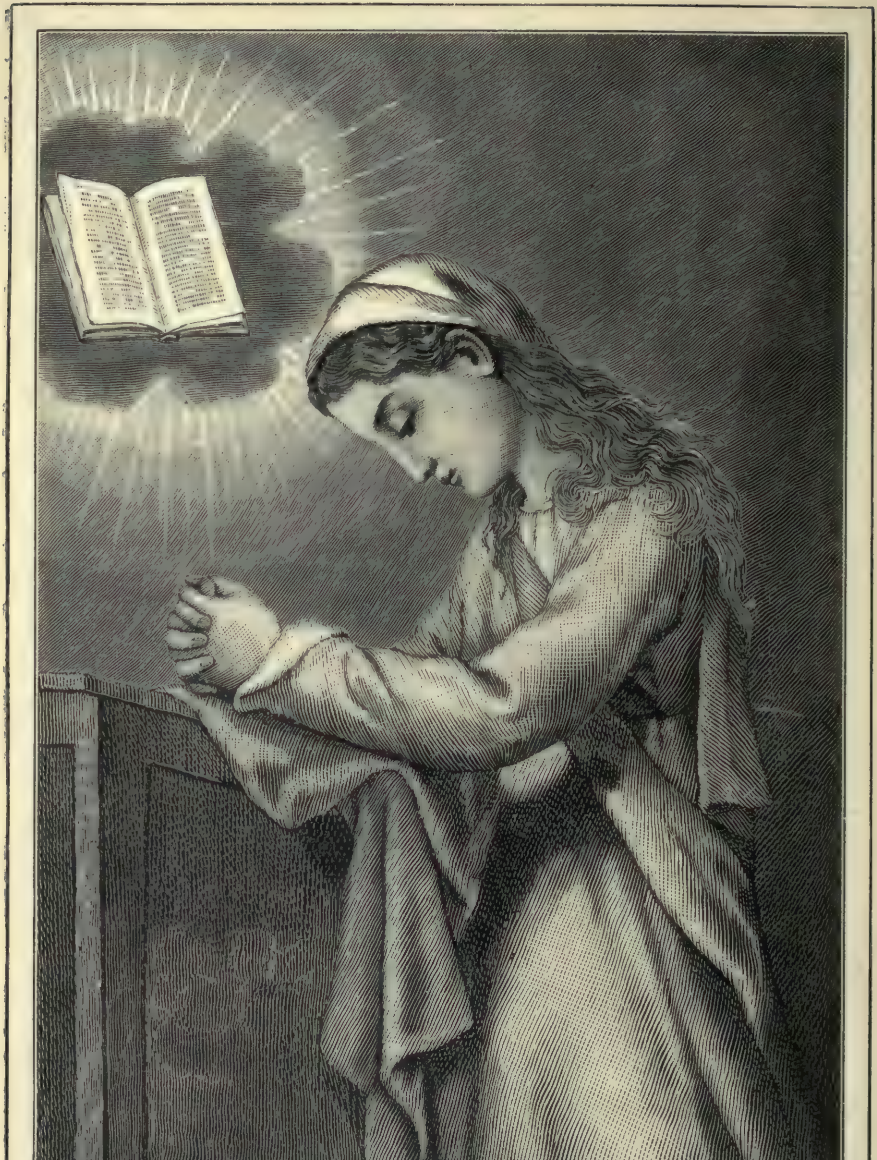
Such men have an idea before them which a Protestant nation has not; they have the idea of a Saint; they believe, they realize the existence of those rare servants of God, who rise up from time to time in the Catholic Church like Angels in disguise, and shed around them a light, as they walk on their way heavenward. Such Catholics may not in practice do what is right and good, but they know what is true; they know what to think and how to judge. They have a standard for their principles of conduct, and it is the image of Saints which forms it for them. A Saint is born like another man; by nature a child of wrath, and needing God's grace to regenerate him. He is baptized like another, he lies helpless and senseless like another, and like another child he comes to years of reason. But soon his parents and their neighbors begin to say, "This is a strange child, he is unlike any other child"; his brothers and his playmates feel an awe of him, they do not know why; they both like him and dislike him, perhaps love him much in spite of his strangeness, perhaps respect him more than they love him. But if there were any holy Priest there, or others who had long served God in prayer and obedience, these would say, "This truly is a wonderful child; this child bids fair to be a Saint." And so he grows up, whether at first he is duly prized by his parents or not; for so it is with all greatness, that, because it is great, it cannot be comprehended by ordinary minds at once; but time, and distance, and contemplation are necessary for its being recognized by beholders, and, therefore, this special heir of glory of whom I am speaking, for a time at least excites no very definite observation, unless indeed (as sometimes happens) anything of miracle occurs from time to time to mark him out. He has come to the age of reason, and, wonderful to say, he has never fallen away into sin. Other children begin to use the gift of reason by abusing it; they understand what is right, only to go counter to it; it is otherwise with him,—not that he may not sin in many things, when we place him in the awful ray of divine Sanctity, but that he does not sin wilfully and grievously,—he is preserved from mortal sin, he is never separated from God by sin, nay, perhaps, he is betrayed only at intervals, or never at all, into any deliberate sin, be it ever so slight, and he is ever avoiding the occasions of sin and resisting temptation. He ever lives in the presence of God, and is thereby preserved from evil, for "the wicked one toucheth him not." Nor, again, as if in other and ordinary matters, he necessarily differed from other boys; he may be ignorant, thoughtless, improvident of the future, rash, impetuous; he is a child, and has the infirmities, failings, fears, and hopes of a child. He may be moved to anger, he may say a harsh word, he may offend his parents, he may be volatile and capricious, he may have no fixed view of things, such as a man has. This is not much to allow! such things are accidents, and are compatible with the presence of a determinate influence of grace, uniting his heart to God. O that the multitude of men were as religious in their best seasons, as the Saints are in their worst! though there have been Saints who seemed to have been preserved even from the imperfections I have been mentioning. There have been Saints whose reason the all-powerful grace of God seems wonderfully to have opened from the very time of their baptism, so that they have offered to their Lord and Saviour, "a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice," "a rational service," even while they have been infants. And, anyhow, whatever are the acts of infirmity and sin in the child I am imagining, still they are the exception in his day's course; the course of each day is religious: while other children are light-minded, and cannot fix their thoughts in prayer, prayer and praise and meditation are his meat and drink. He frequents the churches, and places himself before the Blessed Sacrament: or he is found before some holy image; or he sees visions of the Blessed Virgin, or of the Saints to whom he is devoted. He lives in intimate converse with his guardian Angel, and he shrinks from the very shadow of profaneness or impurity. And thus he is a special witness of the world unseen, and he fulfils the vague ideas and the dreams of the supernatural, which one reads of in poems or romances, with which young people are so much taken, and after which they cannot help sighing, before the world corrupts them.

He grows up, and he has just the same temptations as others, perhaps more violent ones. Men of this world, carnal men, unbelieving men, do not believe that the temptations which they themselves experience, and to which they yield, can be overcome. They reason themselves into the notion that to sin is their very nature, and, therefore, is no fault of theirs: that is, they deny the existence of sin. And accordingly, when they read about the Saints or about holy men generally, they conclude either that these have not had the temptations which they experienced themselves, or that they have not overcome them. They either consider such an one to be a hypocrite, who practices in private the sins which he denounces in public; or, if they have decency enough to abstain from these calumnies, then they consider that he never felt the temptation, and they regard him as a cold and simple person, who has never outgrown his childhood, who has a contracted mind, who does not know the world and life, who is despicable while he is without influence, and dangerous and detestable from his very ignorance when he is in power. But no, my brethren; read the lives of the Saints, you will see how false and narrow a view this is; these men, who think, forsooth, they know the world so well, and the nature of man so deeply, they know nothing of one great far-spreading phenomenon in man,—and that is, his nature under the operation of grace; they know nothing of the second nature, of the supernatural gift, induced by the Almighty Spirit upon our first and fallen nature; they have never met, they have never read of, and they have formed no conception of, a Saint.

He has, I say, the same temptations as another; perhaps greater, because he is to be tried as in a furnace, because he is to become rich in merits, because there is a bright crown reserved for him in Heaven; still temptation he has, and he differs from others, not in being shielded from it, but in being armed against it. Grace overcomes nature; it overcomes indeed in all who shall be saved: none will see God's face hereafter who do not, while here, put away from them mortal sin of every kind; but the Saints overcome with a determination and a vigor, a promptitude and a success, beyond any one else. You read, my brethren, in the lives of Saints, the wonderful account of their conflicts, and their triumphs over the enemy. They are, as I was saying, like heroes of romance, so gracefully, so nobly, so royally do they bear themselves. Their actions are as beautiful as fiction, yet as real as fact. There was St. Benedict, who, when a boy, left Rome, and betook himself to the Apennines in the neighborhood. Three years did he live in prayer, fasting, and solitude, while the Evil One assaulted him with temptation. One day, when it grew so fierce that he feared for his perseverance, he suddenly flung himself, in his scanty hermit's garb, among the thorns and nettles near him, thus turning the current of his thoughts, and chastising the waywardness of the flesh, by sensible stings and smarts. There was St. Thomas, too, the Angelical Doctor, as he is called, as holy as he was profound, or rather the more profound in theological science, because he was so holy. "Even from a youth" he had "sought wisdom, he had stretched out his hands on high, and directed his soul to her, and possessed his heart with her from the beginning"; and so, when the minister of Satan came into his very room, and no other defense was at hand, he seized a burning brand from the hearth, and drove that wicked one, scared and baffled, out of his presence. And there was that poor youth in the early persecutions, whom the impious heathen bound down with cords, and then brought in upon him a vision of evil; and he in his agony bit off his tongue, and spit it out into the face of the temptress, that so the intenseness of the pain might preserve him from the seduction.

Such acts as these, my brethren, are an opening of the heavens, a sudden gleam of supernatural brightness across a dark sky, They enlarge the mind with ideas it had not before, and they show to the multitude what God can do, and what man can be. Not that all Saints have been such in youth: for there are those on the contrary, who, not till after a youth of sin, have been brought by the sovereign grace of God to repentance, still, when once converted, they differed in nothing from those who had ever served Him,—not in supernatural gifts, not in acceptableness, not in detachment from the world, nor in union with Christ, nor in exactness of obedience,—in nought save in the severity of their penance. Others have been called, not from vice and ungodliness, but from a life of mere ordinary blamelessness, or from a state of lukewarmness, or from thoughtlessness, to heroical greatness; and these have often given up lands, and property, and honors, and station, and repute, for Christ's sake. Kings have descended from their thrones, bishops have given up their rank and influence, the learned have given up their pride of intellect, to become poor monks, to live on coarse fare, to be clad in humble weeds, to rise and pray while others slept, to mortify the tongue with silence and the limbs with toil, and to avow an unconditional obedience to another. In early times were the Martyrs, many of them girls and even children, who bore the most cruel, the most prolonged, the most diversified tortures, rather than deny the faith of Christ. Then came the Missionaries among the heathen, who, for the love of souls, threw themselves into the midst of savages, risking and perhaps losing their lives in the attempt to extend the empire of their Lord and Saviour, and who, whether living or dying, have by their lives or by their deaths succeeded in bringing over whole nations into the Church. Others have devoted themselves in the time of war or captivity, to the redemption of Christian slaves from pagan or Mohammedan masters or conquerors; others to the care of the sick in pestilences, or in hospitals; others to the instruction of the poor; others to the education of children; others to incessant preaching and the duties of the confessional; others to devout study and meditation; others to a life of intercession and prayer. Very various are the Saints, their very variety is a token of God's workmanship; but however various, and whatever was their special line of duty, they have been heroes in it; they have attained such noble self-command, they have so crucified the flesh, they have so renounced the world; they are so meek, so gentle, so tender-hearted, so merciful, so sweet, so cheerful, so full of prayer, so diligent, so forgetful of injuries; they have sustained such great and continued pains, they have persevered in such vast labors, they have made such valiant confessions, they have wrought such abundant miracles, they have been blessed with such strange successes, that they have been the means of setting up a standard before us of truth, of magnanimity, of holiness, of love. They are not always our examples, we are not always bound to follow them; not more than we are bound to obey literally some of our Lord's precepts, such as turning the cheek or giving away the coat; not more than we can follow the course of the sun, moon, or stars in the heavens; but, though not always our examples, they are always our standard of right and good; they are raised up to be monuments and lessons, they remind us of God, they introduce us into the unseen world, they teach us what Christ loves, they track out for us the way which leads heavenward. They are to us who see them, what wealth, notoriety, rank, and name are to the multitude of men who live in darkness,—objects of our veneration and of our homage.

O who can doubt between the two? The national religion has many attractions; it leads to decency and order, propriety of conduct, justness of thought, beautiful domestic tastes; but it has not power to lead the multitude upward, or to delineate for them the Heavenly City. It comes of mere nature, and its teaching is of nature. It uses religious words, of course, else it could not be called a religion; but it does not impress on the imagination, it does not engrave upon the heart, it does not inflict upon the conscience, the supernatural; it does not introduce into the popular mind any great ideas, such as are to be recognized by one and all, as common property, and first principles or dogmas from which to start, to be taken for granted on all hands, and handed down as forms and specimens of eternal truth from age to age. It in no true sense inculates the Unseen; and by consequence, sights of this world, material tangible objects, become the idols and the ruin of its children, of souls which were made for God and Heaven. It is powerless to resist the world and the world's teaching: it cannot supplant error by truth; it follows when it should lead. There is but one real Antagonist of the world, and that is the faith of Catholics;—Christ set that faith up, and it will do its work on earth, as it ever has done, till He comes again.



Light of Grace.

GOD'S WILL THE END OF LIFE.

I AM going to ask you a question, my dear brethren, so trite, and therefore so uninteresting at first sight, that you may wonder why I put it, and may object that it will be difficult to fix the mind on it, and may anticipate that nothing profitable can be made of it. It is this: "Why were you sent into the world?" Yet, after all, it is perhaps a thought more obvious than it is common, more easy than it is familiar; I mean it ought to come into your minds, but it does not, and you never had more than a distant acquaintance with it, though that sort of acquaintance with it you have had for many years. Nay, once or twice, perhaps you have been thrown across the thought somewhat intimately, for a short season, but this was an accident which did not last. There are those who recollect the first time, as it would seem, when it came home to them. They were but little children, and they were by themselves, and they spontaneously asked themselves, or rather God spake in them, "Why am I here? how came I here? who brought me here? What am I to do here?" Perhaps it was the first act of reason, the beginning of their real responsibility, the commencement of their trial; perhaps from that day they may date their capacity, their awful power, of choosing between good and evil, and of committing mortal sin. And so, as life goes on, the thought comes vividly, from time to time, for a short season across their conscience; whether in illness, or in some anxiety, or at some season of solitude, or on hearing some preacher, or reading some religious work. A vivid feeling comes over them of the vanity and unprofitableness of the world, and then the question recurs, "Why then am I sent into it?"

And a great contrast indeed does this vain, unprofitable, yet overbearing world present with such a question as that. It seems out of place to ask such a question in so magnificent, so imposing a presence, as that of the great Babylon. The world professes to supply all that we need, as if we were sent into it for the sake of being sent here, and for nothing beyond the sending. It is a great favor to have an introduction to this august world. This is to be our exposition, forsooth, of the mystery of life. Every man is doing his own will here, seeking his own pleasure, pursuing his own ends, and that is why he was brought into existence. Go abroad into the streets of the populous city, contemplate the continuous outpouring there of human energy, and the countless varieties of human character, and be satisfied! The ways are thronged, carriage-way and pavement; multitudes are hurrying to and fro, each on his own errand, or are loitering about from listlessness, or from want of work, or have come forth into the public concourse, to see and to be seen, for amusement or for display, or on the excuse of business. The carriages of the wealthy mingle with the slow wains laden with provisions or merchandise, the productions of art or the demands of luxury. The streets are lined with shops, open and gay, inviting customers, and widen now and then into some spacious square or place, with lofty masses of brickwork or of stone, gleaming in the fitful sunbeam, and surrounded or fronted with what simulates a garden's foliage. Follow them in another direction, and you find the whole groundstead covered with large buildings, planted thickly up and down, the homes of the mechanical arts. The air is filled, below, with a ceaseless, importunate, monotonous din, which penetrates even to your most innermost chamber, and rings in your ears even when you are not conscious of it; and overhead, with a canopy of smoke, shrouding God's day from the realms of obstinate sullen toil. This is the end of man!

Or stay at home, and take up one of those daily prints, which are so true a picture of the world; look down the columns of advertisements, and you will see the catalogue of pursuits, projects, aims, anxieties, amusements, indulgences which occupy the mind of man. He plays many parts: here he has goods to sell, there he wants employment; there again he seeks to borrow money, here he offers you houses, great seats or small tenements; he has food for the million, and luxuries for the wealthy, and sovereign medicines for the credulous, and books, new and cheap, for the inquisitive. Pass on to the news of the day, and you will learn what great men are doing at home and abroad: you will read of wars and rumors of wars; of debates in the Legislature; of rising men, and old statesmen going off the scene; of political contests in this city or that county; of the collision of rival interests. You will read of the money market, and the provision market, and the market for metals; of the state of trade, the call for manufactures, news of ships arrived in port, of accidents at sea, of exports and imports, of gains and losses, of frauds and their detection. Go forward, and you arrive at discoveries in art and science, discoveries (so-called) in religion, the court and royalty, the entertainments of the great, places of amusement, strange trials, offenses, accidents, escapes, exploits, experiments, contests, ventures. O this curious, restless, clamorous, panting being, which we call life!—and is there to be no end to all this? Is there no object in it? It never has an end, it is forsooth its own object!

And now, once more, my brethren, put aside what you see and what you read of the world, and try to penetrate into the hearts, and to reach the ideas and the feelings of those who constitute it; look into them as closely as you can; enter into their houses and private rooms; strike at random through the streets and lanes: take as they come, palace and hovel, office or factory, and what will you find? Listen to their words, witness, alas! their works; you will find in the main the same lawless thoughts, the same unrestrained desires, the same ungoverned passions, the same earthly opinions, the same wilful deeds, in high and low, learned and unlearned; you will find them all to be living for the sake of living; they one and all seem to tell you, "We are our own centre, our own end." Why are they toiling? why are they scheming? for what are they living? "We live to please ourselves; life is worthless except we have our own way; we are not *sent* here at all, but we find ourselves here, and we are but slaves unless we can think what we will, believe what we will, love what we will, hate what we will, do what we will. We detest interference on the part of God or man. We do not bargain to be rich or to be great; but we do bargain, whether rich or poor, high or low, to live for ourselves, to live for the lust of the moment, or, according to the doctrine of the hour, thinking of the future and the unseen just as much or as little as we please."

O my brethren, is it not a shocking thought, but who can deny its truth? The multitude of men are living without any aim beyond this visible scene; they may from time to time use religious words, or they may profess a communion or a worship, as a matter of course,or of expedience, or of duty, but, if there was any sincerity in such profession, the course of the world could not run as it does. What a contrast is all this to the end of life, as it is set before us in our most holy Faith! If there was one among the sons of men, who might allowably have taken His pleasure, and have done His own will here below, surely it was He who came down on earth from the bosom of the Father, and who was so pure and spotless in that human nature which He put on Him, that He could have no human purpose or aim inconsistent with the will of His Father. Yet He, the Son of God, the Eternal Word, came, not to do His own will, but His who sent Him, as you know very well is told us again and again in Scripture. Thus the Prophet in the Psalter, speaking in His person, says, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." And He says in the Prophet Isaias, "The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back." And in the Gospel, when He had come on earth, "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Hence, too, in His agony, He cried out, "Not my will, but Thine, be done"; and St. Paul, in like manner, says, that "Christ pleased not Himself"; and elsewhere, that, "though He was God's Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Surely so it was; as being indeed the Eternal Co-equal Son, His will was one and the same with the Father's will, and He had no submission of will to make; but He chose to take on Him man's nature, and the will of that nature; He chose to take on Him affections, feelings, and inclinations proper to man, a will innocent indeed and good, but still a man's will, distinct from God's will; a will, which, had it acted simply according to what was pleasing to its nature, would, when pain and toil were to be endured, have held back from an active co-operation with the will of God. But, though He took on Himself the nature of man, He took not on Him that selfishness, with which fallen man wraps himself round, but in all things He devoted Himself as a ready sacrifice to His Father. He came on earth, not to take His pleasure, not to follow His taste, not for the mere exercise of human affection, but simply to glorify His Father and to do His will. He came charged with a mission, deputed for a work; He looked not to the right nor to the left, He thought not of Himself, He offered Himself up to God.

Hence it is that He was carried in the womb of a poor woman, who, before His birth, had two journeys to make, of love and of obedience, to the mountains and to Bethlehem. He was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. He was hurried off to Egypt to sojourn there; then He lived till He was thirty years of age in a poor way, by a rough trade, in a small house, in a despised town. Then, when He went out to preach, He had not where to lay His head; He wandered up and down the country, as a stranger upon earth. He was driven out into the wilderness, and dwelt among the wild beasts. He endured heat and cold, hunger and weariness, reproach and calumny. His food was coarse bread, and fish from the lake, or depended on the hospitality of strangers. And as He had already left His Father's greatness on high, and had chosen an earthly home; so again, at that Father's bidding, He gave up the sole solace given Him in this world, and denied Himself His Mother's presence. He parted with her who bore Him; He endured to be strange to her; He endured to call her coldly "woman," who was His own undefiled one, all beautiful, all gracious, the best creature of His hands, and the sweet nurse of His infancy. He put her aside, as Levi, His type, merited the sacred ministry, by saying to His parents and kinsmen, "I know you not." He exemplified in His own person the severe maxim, which He gave to His disciples, "He that loveth mother more than me is not worthy of me." In all these many ways He sacrificed every wish of His own; that we might understand, that, if He, the Creator, came into His own world, not for His own pleasure, but to do His Father's will, we too have most surely some work to do, and have seriously to bethink ourselves what that work is.

Yes, so it is; realize it, my brethren;—every one who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and woman, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing; we are not born at random; we are not here, that we may go to bed at night, and get up in the morning, toil for our bread, eat and drink, laugh and joke, sin when we have a mind, and reform when we are tired of sinning, rear a family and die. God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, He lodges it in the body, one by one, for a purpose. He needs, He deigns to need, every one of us. He has an end for each of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves, but to labor in them for Him. As Christ has His work, we too have ours; as He rejoiced to do His work, we must rejoice in ours also.

St. Paul on one occasion speaks of the world as a scene in a theatre. Consider what is meant by this. You know, actors on a stage are on an equality with each other really, but for the occasion they assume a difference of character; some are high, some are low, some are merry, and some sad. Well, would it not be a simple absurdity in any actor to pride himself on his mock diadem, or his edgeless sword, instead of attending to his part? what, if he did but gaze at himself and his dress? what, if he secreted, or turned to his own use, what was valuable in it? Is it not his business, and nothing else, to act his part well? common sense tells us so. Now, we are all but actors in this world; we are one and all equal, we shall be judged as equals as soon as life is over; yet, equal and similar in ourselves, each has his special part at present, each has his work, each has his mission,—not to indulge his passions, not to make money, not to get a name in the world, not to save himself trouble, not to follow his bent, not to be selfish and self-willed, but to do what God puts on him to do.

Look at that poor profligate in the Gospel, look at Dives; do you think he understood that his wealth was to be spent, not on himself, but for the glory of God?—yet, for forgetting this, he was lost for ever and ever. I will tell you what he thought, and how he viewed things:—he was a young man, and had succeeded to a good estate, and he determined to enjoy himself. It did not strike him that his wealth had any other use than that of enabling him to take his pleasure. Lazarus lay at his gate; he might have relieved Lazarus; *that* was God's will; but he managed to put conscience aside, and he persuaded himself he should be a fool, if he did not make the most of this world, while he had the means. So he resolved to have his fill of pleasure; and feasting was to his mind a principal part of it. "He fared sumptuously every day"; everything belonging to him was in the best style, as men speak; his house, his furniture, his plate of silver and gold, his attendants, his establishments. Everything was for enjoyment, and for show too; to attract the eyes of the world, and to gain the applause and admiration of his equals, who were the companions of his sins. These companions were doubtless such as became a person of such pretensions; they were fashionable men; a collection of refined, high-bred, haughty men, eating, not gluttonously, but what was rare and costly; delicate, exact, fastidious in their taste, from their very habits of indulgence; not eating for the mere sake of eating, or drinking for the mere sake of drinking, but making a sort of science of their sensuality; sensual, carnal, as flesh and blood can be, with eyes, ears, tongue, steeped in impurity, every thought, look, and sense, witnessing or ministering to the evil one who ruled them; yet, with exquisite correctness of idea and judgment, laying down rules for sinning;—heartless and selfish, high, punctilious, and disdainful in their outward deportment, and shrinking from Lazarus, who lay at the gate, as an eyesore, who ought for the sake of decency to be put out of the way. Dives was one of such, and so he lived his short span, thinking of nothing, loving nothing, but himself, till one day he got into a fatal quarrel with one of his godless associates, or he caught some bad illness; and then he lay helpless on his bed of pain, cursing fortune and his physician, that he was no better, and impatient that he was thus kept from enjoying his youth, trying to fancy himself mending when he was getting worse, and disgusted at those who would not throw him some word of comfort in his suspense, and turning more resolutely from his Creator in proportion to his suffering;—and then at last his day came, and he died, and (oh! miserable!) "was buried in hell." And so ended he and his mission.

This was the fate of your pattern and idol, O ye, if any of you be present, young men, who, though not possessed of wealth and rank, yet affect the fashions of those who have them. You, my brethren, have not been born splendidly or nobly; you have not been brought up in the seats of liberal education; you have no high connections; you have not learned the manners nor caught the tone of good society; you have no share of the largeness of mind, the candor, the romantic sense of honor, the correctness of taste, the consideration for others, and the gentleness which the world puts forth as its highest type of excellence; you have not come near the courts or the mansions of the great; yet you ape the sin of Dives, while you are strangers to his refinement. You think it the sign of a gentleman to set yourselves above religion, to criticise the religious and professors of religion, to look at Catholic and Methodist with impartial contempt, to gain a smattering of knowledge on a number of subjects, to dip into a number of frivolous publications, if they are popular, to have read the latest novel, to have heard the singer and seen the actor of the day, to be well up with the news, to know the names and, if so be, the persons of public men, to be able to bow to them, to walk up and down the street with your heads on high, and to stare at whatever meets you; and to say and do worse things, of which these outward extravagances are but the symbol. And this is what you conceive you have come upon earth for! The Creator made you, it seems, O my children, for this work and office, to be a bad imitation of polished ungodliness, to be a piece of tawdry and faded finery, or a scent which has lost its freshness, and does but offend the sense! O! that you could see how absurd and base are such pretences in the eyes of any but yourselves! No calling of life but is honorable; no one is ridiculous who acts suitably to his calling and estate; no one, who has good sense and humility, but may, in any station of life, be truly well-bred and refined; but ostentation, affectation, and ambitious efforts are, in every station of life, high or low, nothing but vulgarities. Put them aside, despise them yourselves, O my very dear sons, whom I love, and whom I would fain serve;—oh! that you could feel that you have souls! oh, that you would have mercy on your souls! oh, that, before it is too late, you would betake yourselves to Him who is the Source of all that is truly high and magnificent and beautiful, all that is bright and pleasant, and secure what you ignorantly seek, in Him whom you so wilfully, so awfully despise!

He alone, the Son of God, "the brightness of the Eternal Light, and the spotless mirror of His Majesty," is the source of all good and all happiness to rich and poor, high and low. If you were ever so high, you would need Him; if you were ever so low, you could offend Him. The poor can offend Him; the poor man can neglect his divinely appointed mission as well as the rich. Do not suppose, my brethren, that what I have said against the upper or the middle class, will not, if you happen to be poor, also lie against you. Though a man were as poor as Lazarus, he could be as guilty as Dives. If you are resolved to degrade yourselves to the brutes of the field, who have no reason and no conscience, you need not wealth or rank to enable you to do so. Brutes have no wealth; they have no pride of life; they have no purple and fine linen, no splendid table, no retinue of servants, and yet they are brutes. They are brutes by the law of their nature: they are the poorest among the poor; there is not a vagrant and outcast who is so poor as they; they differ from him, not in their possessions, but in their want of a soul, in that he has a mission and they have not, he can sin and they cannot. O my brethren, it stands to reason, a man may intoxicate himself with a cheap draught, as well as with a costly one; he may steal another's money for his appetites, though he does not waste his own upon them; he may break through the natural and social laws which encircle him, and profane the sanctity of family duties, though he be, not a child of nobles, but a peasant or artisan,—nay, and perhaps he does so more frequently than they. This is not the poor's blessedness, that he has less temptations to self-indulgence, for he has as many, but that from his circumstances he receives the penances and corrections of self-indulgence. Poverty is the mother of many pains and sorrows in their season, and these are God's messengers to lead the soul to repentance; but, alas! if the poor man indulges his passions, thinks little of religion, puts off repentance, refuses to make an effort, and dies without conversion, it matters nothing that he was poor in this world, it matters nothing that he was less daring than the rich, it matters not that he promised himself God's favor, that he sent for the Priest when death came, and received the last Sacraments; Lazarus too, in that case, shall be buried with Dives in hell, and shall have had his consolation neither in this world nor in the world to come.

My brethren, the simple question is, whatever a man's rank in life may be, does he in that rank perform the work which God has given him to do? Now then, let me turn to others, of a very different description, and let me hear what they will say, when the question is asked them;—why, they will parry it thus: "You give us no alternative," they will say to me, "except that of being sinners or Saints. You put before us our Lord's pattern, and you spread before us the guilt and the ruin of the deliberate transgressor; whereas we have no intention of going so far one way or the other; we do not aim at being Saints, but we have no desire at all to be sinners. We neither intend to disobey God's will, nor to give up our own. Surely there is a middle way, and a safe one, in which God's will and our will may both be satisfied. We mean to enjoy both this world and the next. We will guard against mortal sin; we are not obliged to guard against venial; indeed it would be endless to attempt it. None but Saints do so; it is the work of a life; we need have nothing else to do. We are not monks, we are in the world, we are in business, we are parents, we have families; we must live for the day. It is a consolation to keep from mortal sin; that we do, and it is enough for salvation. It is a great thing to keep in God's favor; what indeed can we desire more? We come at due time to the Sacraments; this is our comfort and our stay; did we die, we should die in grace, and escape the doom of the wicked. But if we once attempted to go further, where should we stop? how will you draw the line for us? the line between mortal and venial sin is very distinct; we understand that:

but do you not see that, if we attended to our venial sins, there would be just as much reason to attend to one as to another? If we began to repress our anger, why not also repress vainglory? why not also guard against niggardliness? why not also keep from falsehood? from gossipping, from idling, from excess in eating? And, after all, without venial sin we never can be, unless indeed we have the prerogative of the Mother of God, which it would be almost heresy to ascribe to any one but her. You are not asking us to be converted; that we understand; we *are* converted, we were converted a long time ago. You bid us aim at an indefinite vague something, which is less than perfection, yet more than obedience, and which, without resulting in any tangible advantage, debars us from the pleasures and embarrasses us in the duties of this world."

This is what you will say; but your premises, my brethren, are better than your reasoning, and your conclusions will not stand. You have a right view why God has sent you into the world, viz., in order that you may get to Heaven; it is quite true also that you would fare well indeed if you found yourselves there, you could desire nothing better; nor, it is true, can you live any time without venial sin. It is true also that you are not obliged to aim at being Saints; it is no sin not to aim at perfection. So much is true and to the purpose; but it does not follow from it that you, with such views and feelings as you have expressed, are using sufficient exertions even for attaining to purgatory. Has your religion any difficulty in it, or is it in all respects easy to you? Are you simply taking your own pleasure in your mode of living, or do you find your pleasure in submitting yourself to God's pleasure? In a word, is your religion a work? for if it be not, it is not religion at all. Here at once, before going into your argument, is a proof that it is an unsound one, because it brings you to the conclusion that, whereas Christ came to do a work, and all Saints, nay, nay, and sinners do a work too, you, on the contrary, have no work to do, because, forsooth, you are neither sinners nor Saints; or, if you once had a work, at least that you have dispatched it already, and you have nothing upon your hands. You have attained your salvation, it seems, before your time, and have nothing to occupy you, and are detained on earth too long. The work days are over, and your perpetual holiday is begun. Did then God send you, above all other men, into the world to be idle in spiritual matters? Is it your mission only to find pleasure in this world, in which you are but as pilgrims and sojourners? Are you more than sons of Adam, who, by the sweat of their brow, are to eat bread till they return to the earth out of which they are taken? Unless you have some work in hand, unless you are struggling, unless you are fighting with yourselves, you are no followers of those who "through many tribulations entered into the kingdom of God." A fight is the very token of a Christian. He is a soldier of Christ; high or low, he is this and nothing else. If you have triumphed over all mortal sin, as you seem to think, then you must attack your venial sins; there is no help for it; there is nothing else to do, if you would be soldiers of Jesus Christ. But, O simple souls! to think you have gained any triumph at all! No: you cannot safely be at peace with any, even the least malignant, of the foes of God; if you are at peace with venial sins, be certain that in their company and under their shadow mortal sins are lurking. Mortal sins are the children of venial, which, though they be not deadly themselves, yet are prolific of death. You may think that you have killed the giants who had possession of your hearts, and that you have nothing to fear, but may sit at rest under your vine and under your fig-tree; but the giants will live again, they will rise from the dust, and, before you know where you are, you will be taken captive and slaughtered by the fierce, powerful, and eternal enemies of God.

The end of a thing is the test. It was our Lord's rejoicing in His last solemn hour, that He had done the work for which He was sent. "I have glorified Thee on earth," He says in His prayer, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do; I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given me out of the world." It was St. Paul's consolation also: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord shall render to me in that day, the just Judge." Alas! alas! how different will be our view of things when we come to die, or when we have passed into eternity, from the dreams and pretences with which we beguile ourselves now! What will Babel do for us then? Will it rescue our souls from the purgatory or the hell to which it sends them? If we were created, it was that we might serve God; if we have His gifts, it is that we may glorify Him; if we have a conscience, it is that we may obey it; if we have the prospect of heaven, it is that we may keep it before us; if we have light, that we may follow it; if we have grace, that we may save ourselves by means of it. Alas! alas! for those who die without fulfilling their mission! who were called to be holy, and lived in sin; who were called to worship Christ, and who plunged into this giddy and unbelieving world; who were called to fight, and who remained idle; who were called to be Catholics, and who did but remain in the religion of their birth! Alas for those who have had gifts and talents, and have not used, or have misused, or abused them; who have had wealth, and have spent it on themselves; who have had abilities, and have advocated what was sinful, or ridiculed what was true, or scattered doubts against what was sacred; who have had leisure, and have wasted it on wicked companions, or evil books, or foolish amusements! Alas! for those, of whom the best that can be said is, that they are harmless and naturally blameless, while they never have attempted to cleanse their hearts or to live in God's sight!

The world goes on from age to age, but the holy Angels and blessed Saints are always crying alas! alas! and woe! woe! over the loss of vocations, and the disappointment of hopes, and the scorn of God's love, and the ruin of souls. One generation succeeds another, and whenever they look down upon earth from their golden thrones, they see scarcely anything but a multitude of guardian spirits, downcast and sad, each following his own charge, in anxiety, or in terror, or in despair, vainly endeavoring to shield him from the enemy, and failing because he will not be shielded. Times come and go, and man will not believe, that that is to be which is not yet, or that what now is only continues for a season, and is not eternity. The end is the trial; the world passes; it is but a pageant and a scene; the lofty palace crumbles, the busy city is mute, the ships of Tarshish have sped away. On heart and flesh death is coming; the veil is breaking. Departing soul, how hast thou used thy talents, thy opportunities, the light poured around thee, the warnings given thee, the grace inspired into thee? O my Lord and Saviour, support me in that hour in the strong arms of Thy Sacraments, and by the fresh fragrance of Thy consolations. Let the absolving words be said over me, and the holy oil sign and seal me, and Thy own Body be my food, and Thy Blood my sprinkling; and let my sweet Mother Mary breathe on me, and my Angel whisper peace to me, and my glorious Saints, and my own dear Father, Philip, smile on me; that in them all, and through them all, I may receive the gift of perseverance, and die, as I desire to live, in Thy faith, in Thy Church, in Thy service, and in Thy love.

NATURE AND GRACE.

IN the Parable of the Good Shepherd our Lord sets before us a dispensation or state of things, which is very strange in the eyes of the world. He speaks of mankind as consisting of two bodies, distinct from each other, divided by as real a line of demarcation as the fence which encloses the sheepfold. "I am the Door," He says, "by me if any man shall have entered in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall snatch them out of my Hand." And in His last prayer for His disciples to His Eternal Father, He says, "I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou hast given me out of the world. Thine they were, and Thou hast given them to me, and they have kept Thy word. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given me, for they are Thine. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also." Nor are these passages solitary or singular; "Fear not, little flock," He says by another Evangelist, "for it hath pleased your Father to give you the kingdom." And again, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto little ones"; and again, "How narrow is the gate, and strait the way which leadeth to life, and few there are who find it!" St. Paul repeats and insists on this doctrine of his Lord, "Ye were once darkness, but now are light in the Lord"; "He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." And St. John, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world, we are of God." Thus there are two parties on this earth, and two only, if we view men in their religious aspect; those, the few, who hear Christ's words and follow Him, who are in the light, and walk in the narrow way, and have the promise of heaven; and those, on the other hand, who are the many, for whom Christ prays not, though He has died for them, who are wise and prudent in their own eyes, who are possessed by the Evil One, and are subject to his rule.

And such is the view taken of mankind, as by their Maker and Re deemer, so also by the small company in whom He lives and is glorified; but far differently does the larger body, the world itself, look upon mankind at large, upon its own vast multitudes, and upon those whom God has taken out of it for His own special inheritance. It considers that all men are pretty much on a level, or that, differ though they may, they differ by such fine shades from each other, that it is impossible, because forsooth it would be untrue and unjust, to divide them into two bodies, or to divide them at all. "Each man is like himself and no one else; each man has his own opinions, his own rule of faith and conduct, his own worship; if a number join together in a religious form, this is an accident, for the sake of convenience; for each is complete in himself; religion is simply a personal concern; there is no such thing really as a common or joint religion, that is, one in which a number of men, strictly speaking, partake; it is all a matter of private judgment. Hence, as they sometimes proceed even to avow, there is no such thing as a true religion or a false; that is true to each, which each sincerely believes to be true; and what is true to one, is not true to his neighbor. There are no special doctrines, necessary to be believed in order to salvation; it is not very difficult to be saved; and most men may take it for granted that they shall be saved. All men are in God's favor, except so far as, and while, they commit acts of sin; but when the sin is over, they get back into His favor again, naturally and as a thing of course, no one knows how, owing to God's infinite indulgence, unless indeed they persevere and die in a course of sin, and perhaps even then. There is no such place as hell, or at least punishment is not eternal. Predestination, election, grace, perseverance, faith, sanctity, unbelief, and reprobation are strange ideas, and, as they think, very false ones." This is the cast of opinion of men in general, in proportion as they exercise their minds on the subject of religion, and think for themselves; and if in any respect they depart from the easy, cheerful, and tranquil temper of mind which it expresses, it is when they are led to think of those who presume to take the contrary view, that is, who take the view set forth by Christ and His Apostles. On these they are commonly severe, that is, on the very persons whom God acknowledges as His, and is training heavenward,—on Catholics, who are the witnesses and preachers of those awful doctrines of grace, which condemn the world and which the world cannot endure.

In truth the world does not know of the existence of grace; nor is it wonderful, for it is ever contented with itself, and has never turned to account the supernatural aids bestowed upon it. Its highest idea of man lies in the order of nature; its pattern man is the natural man; it thinks it wrong to be anything else than a natural man. It sees that nature has a number of tendencies, inclinations, and passions; and because these are natural, it thinks that each of them may be indulged for its own sake, so far as it does no harm to others, or to a person's bodily, mental, and temporal well-being. It considers that want of moderation, or excess, is the very definition of sin, if it goes so far as to recognize that word. It thinks that he is the perfect man who eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and walks, and diverts himself, and studies, and writes, and attends to religion, in moderation. The devotional feeling, and the intellect, and the flesh, have each its claim upon us, and each must have play, if the Creator is to be duly honored. It does not understand, it will not admit, that impulses and propensities, which are found in our nature, as God created it, may nevertheless, if indulged, become sins, on the ground that He has subjected them to higher principles, whether these principles be in our nature, or be superadded to our nature. Hence it is very slow to believe that evil thoughts are really displeasing to God, and incur punishment. Works, indeed, tangible actions, which are seen and which have influence, it will allow to be wrong; but it will not believe even that deeds are sinful, or that they are more than reprehensible, if they are private or personal; and it is blind utterly to the malice of thoughts, of imaginations, of wishes, and of words. Because the wild emotions of anger, lust, greediness, craft, cruelty, are no sin in the brute creation, which has neither the means nor the command to repress them, therefore they are no sins in a being who has a diviner sense and a controlling power. Concupiscence, it considers, may be indulged, because it is in its first elements natural.

Behold here the true origin and fountain-head of the warfare between the Church and the world; here they join issue, and diverge from each other. The Church is built upon the doctrine that impurity is hateful to God, and that concupiscence is its root; with the Prince of the Apostles, her visible Head, she denounces "the corruption of concupiscence which is in the world," or, that corruption in the world which comes of concupiscence; whereas the corrupt world defends, nay, I may even say, sanctifies that very concupiscence which is the world's corruption. Just as its bolder teachers, as you know, my brethren, hold that the laws of this physical creation are so supreme, as to allow of their utterly disbelieving in the existence of miracles, so, in like manner, it deifies and worships human nature and its impulses, and denies the power and the grant of grace. This is the source of the hatred which the world bears to the Church; it finds a whole catalogue of sins brought into light and denounced, which it would fain believe to be no sins at all; it finds itself, to its indignation and impatience, surrounded with sin, morning, noon, and night; it finds that a stern law lies against it in matters where it believed it was its own master and need not think of God; it finds guilt accumulating upon it hourly, which nothing can prevent, nothing remove, but a higher power.

the grace of God. It finds itself in danger of being humbled to the earth as a rebel, instead of being allowed to indulge its self-dependence and self-complacency. Hence it takes its stand on nature, and denies or rejects divine grace. Like the proud spirit in the beginning, it wishes to find its supreme good in its own self, and nothing above it; it undertakes to be sufficient for its own happiness; it has no desire for the supernatural, and therefore does not believe in it. And because nature cannot rise above nature, it will not believe that the narrow way is possible; it hates those who enter upon it as if pretenders and hypocrites, or laughs at their aspirations as romance and fanaticism; lest it should have to believe in the existence of grace.

Now you may think, my brethren, from the way in which I have been contrasting nature and grace, that they cannot possibly be mistaken for each other; but I wish to show you, in the next place, how grace may be mistaken for nature, and nature mistaken for grace. And in explaining this very grave matter, I wish, lest I should be misunderstood, first to say distinctly, that I am merely comparing and contrasting nature and grace one with another in their several characters, and by no means presuming to apply what I shall say of them to actual individuals, or to judge what persons, living or dead, are specimens of the one or of the other. This then being my object, I repeat that, contrary to what might be thought, they may easily be mistaken for each other, because, as it is plain from what I have said, the difference is in a great measure an inward, and therefore a secret one. Grace is lodged in the heart; it purifies the thoughts and motives, it raises the soul to God, it sanctifies the body, it corrects and exalts human nature in regard to those sins of which men are ashamed, and do not make a public display. Accordingly, in outward show, in single actions, in word, in profession, in teaching, in the social and political virtues, in striking and heroical exploits, on the public transitory scene of things, nature may counterfeit grace, nay even to the deception of the man himself in whom the counterfeit occurs. Recollect that it is by nature, not by grace, that man has the gifts of reason and conscience; and mere reason and conscience will lead him to discover, and in a measure pursue, objects which are, properly speaking, supernatural and divine. From the things which are seen, from the voice of tradition, from the existence of the soul, and from the necessity of the case, the natural reason can infer the existence of God. The natural heart can burst forth by fits and starts into emotions of love toward Him; the natural imagination can depict the beauty and glory of His attributes; the natural conscience may ascertain and put in order the truths of the great moral law, nay even to the condemnation of that concupiscence, which it is too weak to subdue, and is therefore persuaded to tolerate.

The natural will can do many things really good and praiseworthy; nay, in particular cases, or at particular seasons, when temptation is away, it may seem to have a strength which it has not, and to be imitating the austerity and purity of a Saint. One man has no temptation to this sin, nor another to that; hence human nature may often show to great advantage; and, as seen in its happier specimens, it may become quite a trial to faith, seeing that in its best estate it has really no relationship to the family of Christ, and no claim whatever to a heavenly reward,—though it can talk of Christ and heaven too, read Scripture, and "do many things willingly" in consequence of reading it, and can exercise a certain sort of belief, however different from that faith which is imparted to us by grace.

For instance, it is a most mournful, often quite a piercing thought, to contemplate the conduct and the character of those who have never received the elementary grace of God in the Sacrament of Baptism.* They may be, in fact, so benevolent, so active and untiring in their benevolence; they may be so wise and so considerate; they may have so much in them to engage the affections of those who see them! Well, let us leave them to God; His grace is over all the earth; if that grace comes to good effect and bears fruit in the hearts of the unbaptized, He will reward it; but, where grace is not, there doubtless what looks so fair has its reward in this world, such good as is in it having no better claim on a heavenly reward than skill in any art or science, than eloquence or wit. And moreover, it often happens, that, where there is much that is specious and amiable, there is also much that is sinful, and frightfully so. Men show their best face in the world; but for the greater part of their time, the many hours of the day and the night, they are shut up in their own thoughts. They are their own witnesses, none see them besides, save God and His Angels; therefore in such cases we can only judge of what we actually see, and can only admire what is in itself good, without having any means of determining the real moral condition of those who display it. Just as children are caught by the mere good nature and familiarity with which they are treated by some grown man, and have no means or thought of forming a judgment about him in other respects, and may be surprised, when they grow up, to find how unworthy he is of their respect or affection; as the uneducated, who have seen very little of the world, have no faculties for distinguishing between one rank of men and another, and consider all persons on a level who are respectably dressed, whatever be their accent, their carriage, or their countenance; so all of us, not children only or the uncultivated, are but novices, or less than novices, in the business of deciding what is the real state in God's sight of this or that man, who is external to the Church, yet in character or conduct resembles her true sons.

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* *Vid.* Sermons for the Day, pp. 68–70.

Not entering then upon this point, which is beyond us, so much we even can see and are sure of, that human nature is, in a degree beyond all words, inconsistent, and that we must not take for granted that it can do anything at all more than it actually does, or that those, in whom it shows most plausibly, are a whit better than they look. We see the best, and (as far as moral excellence goes) the whole of them. We cannot argue from what we see in favor of what we do not see; we cannot take what we see as a specimen of what they really are. Sad, then, as the spectacle of such a man is to a Catholic, he is no difficulty to him. He may have many virtues, yet he may have nothing of a special Christian cast about him, humility, purity, or devotion. He may like his own way intensely, have a great opinion of his own powers, scoff at faith and religious fear, and seldom or never have said a prayer in his life. Nay, even outward gravity of deportment is no warrant that there is not within an habitual indulgence of evil thoughts, and secret offenses odious to Almighty God. We admire, for instance, whatever is excellent in the ancient heathen; we acknowledge without jealousy whatever they have done virtuous and praiseworthy, but we understand as little of the character or destiny of the being in whom that goodness is found, as we understand the nature of the material substances which present themselves to us under the outward garb of shape and color. They are to us as unknown causes which have influenced or disturbed the world, and which manifest themselves in certain great effects, political, social, or ethical; they are to us as pictures, which appeal to the eye, but not to the touch. We do not know that they would prove to be more real than a painting, if we could touch them. Thus much we know, that, if they have attained to heaven, it has been by the grace of God and their co-operation with it; if they have lived without using that grace which is given to all, they have no hope of life; and, if they have lived and died in mortal sin, they are in the state of bad Catholics, and have the prospect of never-ending death.

Yet, if we allow ourselves to take the mere outward appearance of things, and the happier, though partial and occasional efforts of human nature, how great it is, how amiable, how brilliant,—that is, if we may pretend to the power of viewing it distinct from the supernatural influences which have ever haunted it! How great are the old Greek lawgivers and statesmen, whose histories and works are known to some of us, and whose names to many more! How great are those stern Roman heroes, who conquered the world, and prepared the way for

Christ! How wise, how profound, are those ancient teachers and sages! what power of imagination, what a semblance of prophecy, is manifest in their poets! The present world is in many respects not so great as in that old time, but even now there is enough in it to show both the strength of human nature in this respect, and its weakness. Consider the solidity of our own political fabric at home, and the expansion of our empire abroad, and you will have matter enough spread out before you to occupy many a long day in admiration of the genius, the virtues, and the resources of human nature. Take a second meditation upon it; alas! you will find nothing of faith there, but mainly expedience as the measure of right and wrong, and temporal well-being as the end of action.

Again, many are the tales and poems written nowadays, expressing high and beautiful sentiments; I dare say some of you, my brethren, have fallen in with them, and perhaps you have thought to yourselves, that he must be a man of deep religious feeling and high religious profession who could write so well. Is it so in fact, my brethren? it is not so; why? because after all it is *but* poetry, not religion; it is human nature exerting the powers of imagination and reason, which it has, till it seems also to have powers which it has not. There are, you know, in the animal world various creatures, which are able to imitate the voice of man; nature in like manner is often a mockery of grace. The truth is, the natural man sees this or that principle to be good or true from the light of conscience; and then, since he has the power of reasoning, he knows that, if this be true, many other things are true likewise; and then, having the power of imagination, he pictures to himself those other things as true, though he does not really understand them. And then he brings to his aid what he has read and gained from others who *have* had grace, and thus he completes his sketch; and then he throws his feelings and his heart into it, meditates on it, and kindles in himself a sort of enthusiasm, and thus he is able to write beautifully and touchingly about what to others indeed may be a reality, but to him is nothing more than a fiction. Thus some can write about the early Martyrs, and others describe some great Saint of the Middle Ages, not exactly as a Catholic would, but as if they had a piety and a seriousness to which really they are strangers. So, too, actors on a stage can excite themselves till they think they are the persons they represent; and, as you know, prejudiced persons, who wish to quarrel with another, impute something to him, which at first they scarcely believe themselves; but they wish to believe it and act as if it were true, and raise and cherish anger at the thought of it, till at last they come simply to believe it. So it is, I say, in the case of many an author in verse and prose; readers are deceived by his fine writing; they not only praise this or that sentiment, or argument, or description, in what they read, which happens to be true, but they put faith in the writer himself; and they believe sentiments or statements which are false on the credit of the true. Thus it is that people are led away into false religions and false philosophies; a preacher or speaker, who is in a state of nature, or has fallen from grace, is able to say many things to touch the heart of a sinner or to strike his conscience, whether from his natural powers, or from what he has read in books; and the latter forthwith takes him for his prophet and guide, on the warrant of these accidental truths which it required no supernatural gifts to discover and enforce.

Scripture provides us an instance of such a prophet (nay, of one far more favored and honored than any false teacher is now), who nevertheless was the enemy of God; I mean the prophet Balaam. He went forth to curse the chosen people in spite of an express prohibition from heaven, and that for money; and at length he died fighting against them in battle. Such was he in his life and in his death; such were his deeds; but what were his words? most religious, most conscientious, most instructive. "If Balac," he says, "shall give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot alter the word of the Lord my God." Again, "Let my soul die the death of the just, and let my end be like to theirs!" And again, "I will show thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee; to do judgment and to love mercy, and to walk heedfully with thy God." Here is a man, who is not in a state of grace, speaking so religiously, that at first sight you might have thought he was to be followed in whatever he said, and that your soul would have been safe with his.

And thus it often happens, that those who seem so amiable and good, and so trustworthy, when we only know them from their writings, disappoint us so painfully, if at length we come to have a personal acquaintance with them. We do not recognize in the living being the eloquence or the wisdom which so much enchanted us. He is rude, perhaps, and unfeeling; he is selfish, he is dictatorial, he is sensual, he is empty-minded and frivolous; while we in our simplicity had antecedently thought him the very embodiment of purity and tenderness, or an oracle of heavenly truth.

Now, my dear brethren, I have been engaged in bringing before you what human nature can do, and what it can appear, without being reconciled to God, without any hope of heaven, without any security against sin, without any pardon of the original curse, nay, in the midst of mortal sin; but it is a state which has never existed in fact, without great modifications. No one has ever been deprived of the assistance of grace, both for illumination and conversion; even the heathen world as a whole had to a certain extent its darkness relieved by these fitful and recurrent gleams of light; but I have thought it useful to get you to contemplate what human nature is, viewed in itself, for various reasons. It explains how it is that men look so like each other as they do,—grace being imitated, and, as it were, rivalled by nature, both in society at large, and in the hearts of particular persons. Hence the world will-not believe the separation really existing between it and the Church, and the smallness of the flock of Christ. And hence too it is, that numbers who have heard the Name of Christ, and profess to believe in the Gospel, will not be persuaded as regards themselves that they are exterior to the Church, and do not enjoy her privileges; merely because they do their duty in some general way, or because they are conscious to themselves of being benevolent or upright. And this is a point which concerns Catholics too, as I now proceed to show you.

Make yourselves quite sure then, my brethren, of the matter of fact, before you go away with the belief, that you are not confusing, in your own case, nature and grace, and taking credit to yourselves for supernatural works, which merit heaven, when you are but doing the works of a heathen, are unforgiven, and lie under an eternal sentence. O, it is a dreadful thought, that a man may deceive himself with the notion that he is secure, merely because he is a Catholic, and because he has some kind of love and fear of God, whereas he may be no better than many a Protestant round about him, who either never was baptized, or threw himself once for all out of grace on coming to years of understanding. This idea is entirely conceivable: it is well if it be not true in matter of fact. You know, it is one opinion entertained among divines and holy men, that the number of Catholics that are to be saved will on the whole be small. Multitudes of those who never knew the Gospel will rise up in the judgment against the children of the Church, and will be shown to have done more with scantier opportunities. Our Lord speaks of His people as a small flock, as I cited His words when I began: He says, "Many are called, few are chosen." St. Paul, speaking in the first instance of the Jews, says that but "a remnant is saved according to the election of grace." He speaks even of the possibility of his own reprobation. What a thought in an Apostle! yet it is one with which Saints are familiar; they fear both for themselves and for others. It is related in the history of my own dear Patron, St. Philip Neri, that some time after his death he appeared to a holy religious, and bade him take a message of consolation to his children, the Fathers of the Oratory. The consolation was this, that, by the grace of God, up to that day not one of the Congregation had been lost. "None of them lost!" a man may cry out; "well, had his consolation for his children been, that they were all in paradise, having escaped the dark lake of purgatory, that would have been something worth telling; but all he had to say was, that none of them were in hell! Strange if they were! Here was a succession of men, who had given up the world for a religious life, who had given up self for God and their neighbor, who had passed their days in prayer and good works, who had died happily with the last Sacraments, and it is revealed about them, as a great consolation, that not even one of them was lost!" Still such after all is our holy Father's consolation; and, that it should be such, only proves that salvation is not so easy a matter, or so cheap a possession, as we are apt to suppose. It is not obtained by the mere wishing. And, if it was a gift so to be coveted by men, who had made sacrifices for Christ, and were living in sanctity, how much more rare and arduous of attainment is it in those who have confessedly loved the world more than God, and have never dreamed of doing any duty to which the Church did not oblige them!

Tell me, what is the state of your souls and the rule of your lives? You come to Confession, once a year;—four times a year;—at the Indulgences;—you communicate as often; you do not miss Mass on days of obligation; you are not conscious of any great sin.—There you come to an end; you have nothing more to say. What? do you not take God's name in vain? only when you are angry; that is, I suppose, you are subject to fits of violent passion, in which you use every shocking word which the devil puts into your mouth, and abuse and curse, and perhaps strike the objects of your anger?—Only now and then, you say, when you are in liquor. Then it seems you are given to intoxication?—you answer, you never drink so much as not to know what you are doing. Do you really mean that for an excuse? Well, have you improved in these respects in the course of several years past? You cannot say you have, but such sins are not mortal at the most. Then, I suppose, you have not lately fallen into mortal sin at all? You pause, and then you are obliged to confess that you have, and that once and again; and the more I question you, perhaps the longer becomes the catalogue of offenses which have separated you from God. But this is not all; your sole idea of sin is, the sinning in act and in deed; sins of habit, which cling so close to you that they are difficult to detect, and manifest themselves in slight but continual influences on your thoughts, words, and works, do not engage your attention at all. You are selfish, and obstinate, and worldly, and self-indulgent; you neglect your children; you are fond of idle amusements; you scarcely ever think of God from day to day, for I cannot call your hurried prayers morning and night any thinking of Him at all. You are friends with the world, and live a good deal among those who have no sense of religion.

Now what have you to tell me which will set against this? what good have you done? in what is your hope of heaven? whence do you gain it? You perhaps answer me, that the Sacrament of Penance reconciles you from time to time to God; that you live in the world; that you are not called to the religious state; that it is true you love the world more than God, but that you love God sufficiently for salvation, and that you rely in the hour of death upon the powerful intercession of the Blessed Mother of God. Then besides, you have a number of good points, which you go through, and which are to you signs that you *are* in the grace of God; you conceive that your state at worst is one of tepidity. Tepidity! I tell you, you have no marks of tepidity; do you wish to know what a tepid person is? one who has begun to lead almost the life of a Saint, and has fallen from his fervor; one who retains his good practices, but does them without devotion; one who does so much, that we only blame him for not doing more. No, you need not confess tepidity, my brother;—do you wish to have the judgment which I am led to form about you? it is, that probably you are not in the grace of God at all. The probability is, that for a long while past you have gone to Confession without the proper dispositions, without real grief, and without sincere purpose of amendment for your sins. You are probably such, that were you to die this night, you would be lost forever. What do you do more than nature does? You do certain good things; "what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so? what do ye more than others? do not even the heathen so?" You have the ordinary virtues of human nature, or some of them; you are what nature made you, and care not to be better. You may be naturally kind-hearted, and then you do charitable actions to others; you have a natural strength of character,—if so, you are able to bring your passions under the power of reason; you have a natural energy, and you labor for your family; you are naturally mild, and so you do not quarrel; you have a dislike of intemperance, and therefore you are sober. You have the virtues of your Protestant neighbors, and their faults too; what are you better than they?

Here is another grave matter against you, that you are so well with the Protestants about you; I do not mean to say that you are not bound to cultivate peace with all men, and to do them all the offices of charity in your power. Of course you are, and if they respect, esteem, and love you, it redounds to your praise and will gain you a reward; but I mean more than this; I mean they do *not* respect you, but they like you, because they think of you as of themselves, they see no difference between themselves and you. This is the very reason why they so often take your part, and assert or defend your political rights. Here again, there is a sense of course in which our civil rights may be advocated by Protestants without any reflection on us, and with honor to them. We are like others in this, that we are men; that we are members of the same State with them, subjects, contented subjects, of the same Sovereign, that we have a dependence on them, and have them dependent on us; that, like them, we feel pain when ill-used, and are grateful when well treated. We need not be ashamed of a fellowship like this, and those who recognize it in us are generous in doing so. But we have much cause to be ashamed, and much cause to be anxious what God thinks of us, if we gain their support by giving them a false impression in our persons of what the Catholic Church is and what Catholics are bound to be, what bound to believe, and to do; and is not this the case often, my brethren, that the world takes up your interests, because you share its sins?

Nature is one with nature, grace with grace; the world then witnesses against you by being good friends with you; you could not have got on with the world so well, without surrendering something which was precious and sacred. The world likes you, all but your professed creed; distinguishes you from your creed in its judgment of you, and would fain separate you from it in fact. Men say, "These persons are better than their Church; we have not a word to say for their Church; but Catholics are not what they were, they are very much like other men now. Their Creed certainly is bigoted and cruel, but what would you have of them? You cannot expect them to confess this; let them change quietly, no one changes in public,—be satisfied that they are changed. They are as fond of the world as we are; they take up political objects as warmly; they like their own way just as well; they do not like strictness a whit better; they hate spiritual thraldom, and they are half ashamed of the Pope and his Councils. They hardly believe any miracles now, and are annoyed when their own brethren confess that there are such; they never speak of purgatory; they are sore about images; they avoid the subject of Indulgences; and they will not commit themselves to the doctrine of exclusive salvation. The Catholic doctrines are now mere badges of party. Catholics think for themselves and judge for themselves, just as we do; they are kept in their Church by a point of honor, and a reluctance at seeming to abandon a fallen cause."

Such is the judgment of the world, and you, my brethren, are shocked to hear it;—but may it not be, that the world knows more about you than you know about yourselves? "If ye had been of the world," says Christ, "the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." So speaks Christ of His Apostles. How run His words when applied to you? "If ye be of the world, the world will love its own; therefore ye *are* of the world, and I have *not* chosen you out of the world, because the world *doth* love you." Do not complain of the world's imputing to you more than is true; those who live as the world lives give countenance to those who think them of the world, and seem to form but one party with them. In proportion as you put off the yoke of Christ, so does the world by a sort of instinct recognize you, and think well of you accordingly. Its highest compliment is to tell you that you disbelieve. O my brethren, there is an eternal enmity between the world and the Church. The Church declares by the mouth of an Apostle, "Whoso will be a friend of the world, becomes an enemy of God"; and the world retorts, and calls the Church apostate, sorceress, Beelzebub, and Antichrist. She is the image and the mother of the predestinate, and, if you would be found among her children when you die, you must have part in her reproach while you live. Does not the world scoff at all that is glorious, all that is majestic, in our holy religion? Does it not speak against the special creations of God's grace? Does it not disbelieve the possibility of purity and chastity? Does it not slander the profession of celibacy? Does it not deny the virginity of Mary? Does it not cast out her very name as evil? Does it not scorn her as "a dead woman," whom you know to be the Mother of all the living, and the great Intercessor of the faithful? Does it not ridicule the Saints? Does it not make light of their relics? Does it not despise the Sacraments? Does it not blaspheme the awful Presence which dwells upon our altars, and mock bitterly and fiercely at our believing that what it calls bread and wine is that very same Body and Blood of the Lamb, which lay in Mary's womb and hung on the Cross? What are we, that we should be better treated than our Lord, and His Mother, and His servants, and His works? Nay, what are we, if we *be* better treated, but friends of those who thus treat us well, and who ill-treat Him?

O my dear brethren, be children of grace, not of nature; be not seduced by this world's sophistries and assumptions; it pretends to be the work of God, but in reality it comes of Satan. "I know my sheep," says our Lord, "and mine know me, and they follow me." "Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth," says the Bride in the Canticle, "where Thou feedest, where Thou restest at noon"; and He answers her, "Go forth, and follow after the steps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." Let us follow the Saints, as they follow Christ; so that, when He comes in judgment, and the wretched world sinks to perdition, "on us sinners, His servants, hoping in the multitude of His mercies, He may vouchsafe to bestow some portion and fellowship with His Holy Apostles and Martyrs, with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcelline, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cicely, Anastasia, and all His Saints, not for the value of our merit, but according to the bounty of His pardon, through the same Christ our Lord."

FAITH AND PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

WHEN we consider the beauty, the majesty, the completeness, the resources, the consolations, of the Catholic Religion, it may strike us with wonder, my brethren, that it does not convert the multitude of those who come in its way. Perhaps you have felt this surprise yourselves; especially those of you who have been recently converted, and can compare it, from experience, with those religions which the millions of this country choose instead of it. You know, from experience, how barren, unmeaning, and baseless those religions are; what poor attractions they have, and how little they have to say for themselves. Multitudes, indeed, are of no religion at all; and you may not be surprised that those who cannot even bear the thought of God, should not feel drawn to His Church; numbers, too, hear very little about Catholicism, or a great deal of abuse and calumny against it, and you may not be surprised that they do not all at once become Catholics: but what may fairly surprise those who enjoy the fulness of Catholic blessings is, that those who see the Church ever so distantly, who see even gleams or the faint lustre of her majesty, nevertheless should not be so far attracted by what they see as to seek to see more,—should not at least put themselves in the way to be led on to the Truth, which of course is not ordinarily recognized in its divine authority except by degrees. Moses, when he saw the burning bush, turned aside to see "that great sight"; Nathanael, though he thought no good could come out of Nazareth, at least followed Philip to Christ, when Philip said to him, "Come and see"; but the multitudes about us see and hear, in some measure, surely,—many in ample measure,—and yet are not persuaded thereby to see and hear more, are not moved to act upon their knowledge. Seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not; they are contented to remain as they are; they are not drawn to inquire, or at least not drawn on to embrace.

Many explanations may be given of this difficulty; I will proceed to suggest to you one, which will sound like a truism, but yet has a meaning in it. Men do not become Catholics, because they have not faith. Now you may ask me, how this is saying more than that men do not believe the Catholic Church *because* they do not believe it; which is saying nothing at all. Our Lord, for instance, says, "He who cometh to me shall not hunger, and he who believeth in me shall never thirst";—to believe then and to come are the same thing. If they had faith, of course they would join the Church, for the very meaning, the very exercise of faith, is joining the Church. But I mean something more than this: faith is a state of mind, it is a particular mode of thinking and acting, which is exercised, always indeed toward God, but in very various ways. Now I mean to say, that the multitude of men in this country have not this habit or character of mind. We could conceive, for instance, their believing in their own religions, even if they did not believe in the Church; this would be faith, though a faith improperly directed; but they do not believe even their own religions; they do not believe in anything at all. It is a definite defect in their minds; as we might say that a person had not the virtue of meekness, or of liberality, or of prudence, quite independently of this or that exercise of the virtue, so there is such a religious virtue as faith, and there is such a defect as the absence of it. Now I mean to say that the great mass of men in this country have not this particular virtue called faith, have not this virtue at all. As a man might be without eyes or without hands, so they are without faith; it is a distinct want or fault in their soul; and what I say is, that *since* they have not this faculty of religious belief, no wonder they do not embrace that, which cannot really be embraced without it. They do not believe any teaching at all in any true sense; and therefore they do not believe the Church in particular.

Now, in the first place, what is faith? it is assenting to a doctrine as true, which we do not see, which we cannot prove, because God says it is true, who cannot lie. And further than this, since God says it is true, not with His own voice, but by the voice of His messengers, it is assenting to what man says, not simply viewed as a man, but to what he is commissioned to declare, as a messenger, prophet, or ambassador from God. In the ordinary course of this world we account things true either because we see them, or because we can perceive that they follow and are deducible from what we do see; that is, we gain truth by sight or by reason, not by faith. You will say indeed, that we accept a number of things which we cannot prove or see, on the word of others; certainly; but then we accept what they say only as the word of man; and we have not commonly that absolute and unreserved confidence in them, which nothing can shake. We know that man is open to mistake, and we are always glad to find some confirmation of what he says, from other quarters, in any important matter; or we receive his information with negligence and unconcern, as something of little consequence, as a matter of opinion; or, if we act upon it, it is as a matter of prudence, thinking it best and safest to do so. We take his word for what it is worth, and we use it either according to our necessity, or its probability. We keep the decision in our own hands, and reserve to ourselves the right of reopening the question wherever we please. This is very different from divine faith; he who believes that God is true, and that this is His word, which He has committed to man, has no doubt at all. He is as certain that the doctrine taught is true, as that God is true; and he is certain, *because* God is true, *because* God has spoken, not because he sees its truth or can prove its truth. That is, faith has two peculiarities;—it is most certain, decided, positive, immovable in its assent, and it gives this assent not because it sees with the eye, or sees with the reason, but because it receives the tidings from one who comes from God.

That is what faith was in the time of the Apostles, as no one can deny; and what it was then, it must be now, else it ceases to be the same thing. I say, it certainly was this in the Apostles' time, for you know they preached to the world that Christ was the Son of God, that He was born of a Virgin, that He had ascended on high, that He would come again to judge all, the living and the dead. Could the world see all this? could it prove it? how then were men to receive it? why did so many embrace it? on the word of the Apostles, who were, as their powers showed, messengers from God. Men were told to submit their reason to a living authority. Moreover, whatever an Apostle said, his converts were bound to believe; when they entered the Church, they entered it in order to learn. The Church was their teacher; they did not come to argue, to examine, to pick and choose, but to accept whatever was put before them. No one doubts, no one can doubt this, of those primitive times. A Christian was bound to take without doubting all that the Apostles declared to be revealed; if the Apostles spoke, he had to yield an internal assent of his mind; it would not be enough to keep silence, it would not be enough not to oppose: it was not allowable to credit in a measure; it was not allowable to doubt. No; if a convert had his own private thoughts of what was said, and only kept them to himself, if he made some secret opposition to the teaching. if he waited for farther proof before he believed it, this would be a proof that he did not think the Apostles were sent from God to reveal His will; it would be a proof that he did not in any true sense believe at all. Immediate, implicit submission of the mind was, in the lifetime of the Apostles, the only, the necessary token of faith; then there was no room whatever for what is now called private judgment. No one could say, "I will choose my religion for myself, I will believe this, I will not believe that; I will pledge myself to nothing; I will believe just as long as I please and no longer; what I believe to-day I will reject to-morrow, if I choose. I will believe what the Apostles have as yet said, but I will not believe what they shall say in time to come." No; either the Apostles were from

God, or they were not; if they were, everything that they preached was to be believed by their hearers; if they were not, there was nothing for their hearers to believe. To believe a little, to believe more or less, was impossible; it contradicted the very notion of believing; if one part was to be believed, every part was to be believed; it was an absurdity to believe one thing and not another; for the word of the Apostles, which made the one true, made the other true too; they were nothing in themselves, they were all things, they were an infallible authority, as coming from God. The world had either to become Christian, or to let it alone; there was no room for private tastes and fancies, no room for private judgment.

Now surely this is quite clear from the nature of the case; but is also clear from the words of Scripture. "We give thanks to God," says St. Paul, "without ceasing, because when ye had received from us the word of hearing, which is of God, ye received it, not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God." Here you see St. Paul expresses what I have said above; that the word comes from God, that it is spoken by men, that it must be received, not as man's word, but as God's word. So in another place he says, "He who despiseth these things, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given in us His Holy Spirit." Our Saviour had made a like declaration already, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me." Accordingly St. Peter on the day of Pentecost said, "Men of Israel, *hear* these words, God hath raised up this Jesus, whereof *we* are *witnesses*. Let all the house of Israel *know most certainly* that God hath made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." At another time he said, "We ought to obey God, rather than man; we are *witnesses* of these things, and so *is the Holy Ghost*, whom God has given to all who obey Him." And again, "He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He (Jesus) who hath been appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and of the dead." And you know that the persistent declaration of the first preachers was, "Believe and thou shalt be saved": they do not say, "prove our doctrine by your own reason," nor "wait till you see before you believe"; but, "believe without seeing and without proving, because our word is not our own, but God's word." Men might indeed use their reason in inquiring into the pretensions of the Apostles; they might inquire whether or not they did miracles; they might inquire whether they were predicted in the Old Testament as coming from God; but when they had ascertained this fairly in whatever way, they were to take all the Apostles said for granted without proof, they were to exercise their faith, they were to be saved by hearing. Hence, as you perhaps observed, St. Paul significantly calls the revealed doctrine "the word of hearing," in the passage I quoted; men came to hear, to accept, to obey, not to criticise what was said; and in accordance with this he asks elsewhere, "How shall they believe Him, whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

Now, my dear brethren, consider, are not these two states or acts of mind quite distinct from each other;—to believe simply what a living authority tells you; and to take a book, such as Scripture, and to use it as you please, to master it, that is, to make yourself the master of it, to interpret it for yourself, and to admit just what you choose to see in it, and nothing more? Are not these two procedures distinct in this, that in the former you submit, in the latter you judge? At this moment I am not asking you which is the better, I am not asking whether this or that is practicable now, but are they not two ways of taking up a doctrine, and not one? is not submission quite contrary to judging? Now, is it not certain that faith in the time of the Apostles consisted in submitting? and is it not certain that it did not consist in judging for one's self? It is in vain to say that the man who judges from the Apostles' writings, does submit to those writings in the first instance, and therefore has faith in them; else why should he refer to them at all? There is, I repeat, an essential difference between the act of submitting to a living oracle, and to his written words; in the former case there is no appeal from the speaker, in the latter the final decision remains with the reader. Consider how different is the confidence with which you report another's words in his presence and in his absence. If he be absent, you boldly say that he holds so and so, or said so and so; but let him come into the room in the midst of the conversation, and your tone is immediately changed. It is then, "I *think* I have heard you say something *like* this, or what I *took* to be this"; or you modify considerably the statement or the fact to which you originally pledged him, dropping one-half of it for safety-sake, or retrenching the most startling portions of it; and then after all you wait with some anxiety to see whether he will accept any portion of it at all. The same sort of process takes place in the case of the written document of a person now dead. I can fancy a man magisterially expounding St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians or to the Ephesians, who would be better content with the writer's absence than his sudden reappearance among us; lest the Apostle should take his own meaning out of his commentator's hands and explain it for himself. In a word, though he says he has faith in St. Paul's writings, he confessedly has no faith in St. Paul; and though he may speak much about truth as found in Scripture, he has no wish at all to be like one of these Christians whose names and deeds occur in it.

I think I may assume that this virtue, which was exercised by the first Christians, is not known at all among Protestants now; or at least if there are instances of it, it is exercised toward those, I mean their own teachers and divines, who expressly disclaim that they are fit objects of it, and who exhort their people to judge for themselves. Protestants, generally speaking, have not faith, in the primitive meaning of that word; this is clear from what I have been saying, and here is a confirmation of it. If men believed now, as they did in the times of the Apostles, they could not doubt nor change. No one can doubt whether a word spoken by God is to be believed; of course it is; whereas any one, who is modest and humble, may easily be brought to doubt of his own inferences and deductions. Since men nowadays deduce from Scripture, instead of believing a teacher, you may expect to see them waver about; they will feel the force of their own deductions more strongly at one time than at another, they will change their minds about them, or perhaps deny them altogether; whereas this cannot be, while a man has faith, that is, belief that what a preacher says to him comes from God. This is what St. Paul especially insists on, telling us that Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are given us that "we may all attain to unity of faith," and, on the contrary, in order "that we be *not* as children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every gale of doctrine." Now, in matter of fact, do not men in this day change about in their religious opinions without any limit? Is not this, then, a proof that they have not that faith which the Apostles demanded of their converts? If they had faith, they would not change. Once believe that God has spoken, and you are sure He cannot unsay what He has already said; He cannot deceive; He cannot change; you have received it once for all; you will believe it ever.

Such is the only rational, consistent account of faith; but so far are Protestants from professing it, that they laugh at the very notion of it. They laugh at the notion itself of men pinning their faith (as they express themselves) upon Pope or Council; they think it simply superstitious and narrow-minded, to profess to believe just what the Church believes, and to assent to whatever she shall say in time to come on matters of doctrine. That is, they laugh at the bare notion of doing what Christians undeniably did in the time of the Apostles. Observe, they do not merely ask whether the Catholic Church has a claim to teach, has authority, has the gifts;—this is a reasonable question;—no, they think that the very state of mind, which such a claim involves in those who admit it, namely, the disposition to accept without reserve or question, that this is slavish. They call it priestcraft to insist on this surrender of the reason, and superstition to make it. That is, they quarrel with the very state of mind which all Christians had in the age of the Apostles; nor is there any doubt (who will deny it?) that those who thus boast of not being led blindfold, of judging for themselves, of believing just as much and just as little as they please, of hating dictation and so forth, would have found it an extreme difficulty to hang on the lips of the Apostles, had they lived at their date, or rather would have simply resisted the sacrifice of their own liberty of thought, would have thought life eternal too dearly purchased at such a price, and would have died in their unbelief. And they would have defended themselves on the plea that it was absurd and childish to ask them to believe without proof, to bid them give up their education, and their intelligence, and their science, and, in spite of all those difficulties which reason and sense find in the Christian doctrine, in spite of its mysteriousness, its obscurity, its strangeness, its unacceptableness, its severity, to require them to surrender themselves to the teaching of a few unlettered Galilæans, or a learned, indeed, but fanatical Pharisee. This is what they would have said then; and if so, is it wonderful they do not become Catholics now? The simple account of their remaining as they are, is, that they lack one thing,—they have not faith; it is a state of mind, it is a virtue, which they do not recognize to be praiseworthy, which they do not aim at possessing.

What they feel now, my brethren, is just what both Jew and Greek felt before them in the time of the Apostles, and what the natural man has felt ever since. The great and wise men of the day looked down upon faith, then as now, as if it were unworthy the dignity of human nature. "See your vocation, brethren, that there are not" among you "many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen to confound the strong, and the mean things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might destroy the things that are, that no flesh might glory in His sight." Hence the same Apostle speaks of "the foolishness of preaching." Similar to this is what our Lord had said in His prayer to the Father: "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto little ones." Now is it not plain that men of this day have just inherited the feelings and traditions of these falsely wise and fatally prudent persons in our Lord's day? They have the same obstruction in their hearts to entering the Catholic Church, which Pharisees and Sophists had before them; it goes against them to believe her doctrine, not so much for want of evidence that she is from God, as because, if so, they shall have to submit their minds to living men, who have not their own cultivation or depth of intellect, and because they must receive a number of doctrines, whether they will or no, which are strange to their imagination and difficult to their reason. The very characteristic of the Catholic teaching and of the Catholic teacher is to them a preliminary objection to their becoming Catholics, so great, as to throw into the shade any argument, however strong, which is producible in behalf of the mission of those teachers and the origin of that teaching. In short, they have not faith.

They have not in them the principle of faith; and I repeat, it is nothing to the purpose to urge that at least they firmly believe Scripture to be the word of God. In truth, it is much to be feared that their acceptance of Scripture itself is nothing better than a prejudice or inveterate feeling impressed on them when they were children. A proof of it is this: that, while they profess to be so shocked at Catholic miracles, and are not slow to call them "lying wonders," they have no difficulty at all about Scripture narratives, which are quite as difficult to the reason as any miracles recorded in the history of the Saints. I have heard on the contrary of Catholics who have been startled at first reading in Scripture the narratives of the ark in the deluge, of the tower of Babel, of Balaam and Balac, of the Israelites' flight from Egypt and entrance into the promised land, and of Esau's and Saul's rejection; which the bulk of Protestants receive without any effort of mind. How, then, do these Catholics accept them? by faith? They say, "God is true, and every man a liar." How come Protestants so easily to receive them? by faith? Nay, I conceive that in most cases there is no submission of the reason at all; simply they are so familiar with the passages in question, that the narrative presents no difficulties to their imagination; they have nothing to overcome. If, however, they *are* led to contemplate these passages in themselves, and to try them in the balance of probability, and to begin to question about them, as will happen when their intellect is cultivated, then there is nothing to bring them back to their former habitual or mechanical belief; they know nothing of submitting to authority, that is, they know nothing of faith; for they have no authority to submit to. They either remain in a state of doubt without any great trouble of mind, or they go on to ripen into utter disbelief on the subjects in question, though they may say nothing about it. Neither before they doubt, nor when they doubt, is there any token of the presence in them of a power subjecting reason to the word of God. No; what looks like faith, is a mere hereditary persuasion, not a personal principle; it is a habit which they have learned in the nursery, which has never changed into anything higher, and which is scattered and disappears, like a mist, before the light, such as it is, of reason. If, however, there are Protestants, who are not in one or other of these two states, either of credulity or of doubt, but who firmly believe in spite of all difficulties, they certainly have some claim to be considered under the influence of faith; but there is nothing to show that such persons, where they are found, are not in the way to become Catholics, and perhaps they are already called so by their friends, showing in their own examples the logical, indisputable connection which exists between possessing faith and joining the Church.

If, then, faith be now the same faculty of mind, the same sort of habit or act, which it was in the days of the Apostles, I have made good what I set about showing. But it must be the same; it cannot mean two things; the word cannot have changed its meaning. Either say that faith is not necessary now at all, or take it to be what the Apostles meant by it, but do not say that you have it, and then show me something quite different, which you have put in the place of it. In the Apostles' days the peculiarity of faith was submission to a living authority; this is what made it so distinctive; this is what made it an act of submission at all; this is what destroyed private judgment in matters of religion. If you will not look out for a living authority, and will bargain for private judgment, then say at once that you have not Apostolic faith. And in fact you have it not; the bulk of this nation has it not; confess you have it not; and then confess that this is the reason why you are not Catholics. You are not Catholics because you have not faith. Why do not blind men see the sun? because they have no eyes; in like manner it is vain to discourse upon the beauty, the sanctity, the sublimity of the Catholic doctrine and worship, where men have no faith to accept it as divine. They may confess its beauty, sublimity, and sanctity, without believing it; they may acknowledge that the Catholic religion is noble and majestic; they may be struck with its wisdom, they may admire its adaptation to human nature, they may be penetrated by its tender and winning bearing, they may be awed by its consistency. But to commit themselves to it, that is another matter; to choose it for their portion, to say with the favored Moabitess, "Whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go! and where thou shalt dwell, I will dwell; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," this is the language of faith. A man may revere, a man may extol, who has no tendency whatever to obey, no notion whatever of professing. And this often happens in fact: men are respectful to the Catholic religion; they acknowledge its services to mankind, they encourage it and its professors; they like to know them, they are interested in hearing of their movements, but they are not, and never will be, Catholics. They will die as they have lived, out of the Church, because they have not possessed themselves of that faculty by which the Church is to be approached. Catholics who have not studied them or human nature, will wonder they remain where they are; nay, they themselves alas for them! will sometimes lament they cannot become Catholics. They will feel so intimately the blessedness of being a Catholic, that they will cry out, "O, what would I give to be a Catholic! O, that I could believe what I admire! but I do not, and I can no more believe merely because I wish to do so, than I can leap over a mountain. I should be much happier were I a Catholic; but I am not; it is no use deceiving myself; I am what I am; I revere, I cannot accept."

Oh, deplorable state! deplorable because it is utterly and absolutely their own fault, and because such great stress is laid in Scripture, as they know, on the necessity of faith for salvation. Faith is there made the foundation and commencement of all acceptable obedience. It is described as the "argument" or "proof of things not seen"; by faith men have understood that God is, that He made the world, that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, that the flood was coming, that their Saviour was to be born. "Without faith it is impossible to please God"; "by faith we stand"; "by faith we walk"; "by faith we overcome the world." When our Lord gave to the Apostles their commission to preach all over the world, He continued, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned." And He declared to Nicodemus, "He that believeth in the Son, is not judged; but he that doth not believe is already judged, because he believeth not in the Name of the Only-begotten Son of God." He said to the Pharisees, "If you believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." To the Jews, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." And you may recollect that before His miracles, He commonly demands faith of the supplicant: "All things are possible," He says, "to him that believeth"; and we find in one place "He could not do any miracle," on account of the unbelief of the inhabitants.

Has faith changed its meaning, or is it less necessary now? Is it not still what it was in the Apostles' day, the very characteristic of Christianity, the special instrument of renovation, the first disposition for justification, one out of the three theological virtues? God might have renewed us by other means, by sight, by reason, by love, but He has chosen to "purify our hearts by faith"; it has been His will to select an instrument which the world despises, but which is of immense power. He preferred it, in His infinite wisdom, to every other; and if men have it not, they have not the very element and rudiment, out of which are formed, on which are built, the Saints and Servants of God. And they have it not, they are living, they are dying, without the hopes, without the aids, of the Gospel, because, in spite of so much that is good in them, in spite of their sense of duty, their tenderness of conscience on many points, their benevolence, their uprightness, their generosity, they are under the dominion (I must say it) of a proud fiend; they have this stout spirit within them, they determine to be their own masters in matters of thought, about which they know so little; they consider their own reason better than any one's else; they will not admit that any one comes from God who contradicts their own view of truth. What! is none their equal in wisdom anywhere? Is there none other whose word is to be taken on religion? Is there none to wrest from them their ultimate appeal to themselves? Have they in no possible way the occasion or opportunity of faith? Is it a virtue, which, in consequence of their transcendent sagacity, their prerogative of omniscience, they must give up hope of exercising? If the pretensions of the Catholic Church do not satisfy them, let them go somewhere else, if they can. If they are so fastidious that they cannot trust her as the oracle of God, let them find another more certainly from Him than the House of His own institution, which has ever been called by His Name, has ever maintained the same claims, has ever taught one substance of doctrine, and has triumphed over those who preached any other. Since Apostolic faith was in the beginning reliance on man's word as being God's word, since what faith was then such it is now, since faith is necessary for salvation, let them attempt to exercise it toward another, if they will not accept the Bride of the Lamb. Let them, if they can, put faith in some of those religions which have lasted a whole two or three centuries in a corner of the earth. Let them stake their eternal prospects on kings and nobles and parliaments and soldiery, let them take some mere fiction of the law, or abortion of the schools, or idol of a populace, or upstart of a crisis, or oracle of lecture-rooms, as the prophet of God. Alas! they are hardly bestead if they must possess a virtue, which they have no means of exercising,—if they must make an act of faith, they know not on whom, and know not why!

What thanks ought we to render to Almighty God, my dear brethren, that He has made us what we are! It is a matter of grace. There are, to be sure, many cogent arguments to lead one to join the Catholic Church, but they do not force the will. We may know them, and not be moved to act upon them. We may be convinced without being persuaded. The two things are quite distinct from each other, seeing you ought to believe, and believing; reason, if left to itself, will bring you to the conclusion that you have sufficient grounds for believing, but belief is the gift of grace. You are then what you are, not from any excellence or merit of your own, but by the grace of God who has chosen you to believe. You might have been as the barbarian of Africa, or the freethinker of Europe, with grace sufficient to condemn you, because it had not furthered your salvation. You might have had strong inspirations of grace and have resisted them, and then additional grace might not have been given to overcome your resistance. God gives not the same measure of grace to all. Has He not visited you with over-abundant grace? And was it not necessary for your hard hearts to receive more than other people? Praise and bless Him continually for the benefit; do not forget, as time goes on, that it is of grace; do not pride yourselves upon it; pray ever not to lose it; and do your best to make others partakers of it.

And you, my brethren, also, if such be present, who are not as yet Catholics, but who by your coming hither seem to show your interest in our teaching, and your wish to know more about it, you too remember, that though you may not yet have faith in the Church, still God has brought you into the way of obtaining it. You are under the influence of His grace; He has brought you a step on your journey; He wishes to bring you farther, He wishes to bestow on you the fulness of His blessings, and to make you Catholics. You are still in your sins; probably you are laden with the guilt of many years, the accumulated guilt of many a deep mortal offense, which no contrition has washed away, and to which no Sacrament has been applied. You at present are troubled with any uneasy conscience, a dissatisfied reason, an unclean heart, and a divided will; you need to be converted. Yet now the first suggestions of grace are working in your souls, and are to issue in pardon for the past and sanctity for the future. God is moving you to acts of faith, hope, love, hatred of sin, repentance; do not disappoint Him, do not thwart Him; concur with Him, obey Him. You look up, and you see, as it were, a great mountain to be scaled; you say, "How can I possibly find a path over these giant obstacles, which I find in the way of my becoming a Catholic? I do not comprehend this doctrine, and I am pained at that; a third seems impossible; I never can be familiar with one practice, I am afraid of another; it is one maze and discomfort to me, and I am led to sink down in despair." Say not so, my dear brethren; look up in hope, trust in Him who calls you forward. "Who art thou, O great mountain, Zorobabel? but a plain." He will lead you forward step by step, as He has led forward many a one before you. He will make the crooked straight and the rough plain. He will turn the streams, and dry up the rivers, which lie in your path. "He shall strengthen your feet like harts' feet, and set you up on high places. He shall widen your steps under you, and your tread shall not be weakened." "There is no God like the God of the righteous; He that mounts the heaven is thy Helper; by His mighty working the clouds disperse. His dwelling is above, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He shall cast out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Crumble away." "The young shall faint, and youths shall fall; but they that hope in the Lord shall be new-fledged in strength, they shall take feathers like eagles, they shall run and not labor, they shall walk and not faint."

FAITH AND DOUBT.

THOSE who are drawn by curiosity or a better motive to inquire into the Catholic Religion, sometimes put to us a strange question,—whether, if they took up the profession of it, they would be at liberty, when they felt inclined, to reconsider the question of its divine authority; meaning by "reconsideration" an inquiry springing from doubt of it, and possibly ending in a denial. The same question, in the form of an objection, is often asked by those who have no thoughts at all of becoming Catholics, and who enlarge upon it, as something terrible, that whoever once enters the pale of the Church, on him the door of egress is shut forever; that, once a Catholic, he never can doubt again; that, whatever his misgivings may be, he must stifle them, nay must start from them as the suggestion of the evil spirit; in short, that he must give up altogether the search after truth, and do a violence to his mind, which is nothing short of immoral. This is what is said, my brethren, by certain objectors, and their own view is, or ought to be, if they are consistent, this,—that it is a fault ever to make up our mind once for all on any religious subject whatever; and that, however sacred a doctrine may be, and however evident to us,—let us say, for instance, the divinity of our Lord, or the existence of God,—we ought always to reserve to ourselves the liberty of doubting about it. I cannot help thinking that so extravagant a position, as this is, confutes itself; however, I will consider the contrary (that is, the Catholic) view of the subject, on its own merits, though without admitting the language in which it was just now stated by its opponents.

It is, then, perfectly true, that the Church does not allow her children to entertain any doubt of her teaching; and that, first of all, simply for this reason, because they are Catholics only while they have faith, and faith is incompatible with doubt. No one can be a Catholic without a simple faith, that what the Church declares in God's name, is God's word, and therefore true. A man must simply believe that the Church is the oracle of God; he must be as certain of her mission, as he is of the mission of the Apostles. Now, would any one ever call him certain that the Apostles came from God, if, after professing his certainty he added, that, perhaps he might have reason to doubt one day about their mission? Such an anticipation would be a real, though latent, doubt, betraying that he was not certain of it at present. A person who says, "I believe just at this moment, but perhaps I am excited without knowing it, and I cannot answer for myself, that I shall believe to-morrow," does not believe now. A man who says, "Perhaps I am in a kind of delusion, which will one day pass away from me, and leave me as I was before"; or, "I believe as far as I can tell, but there may be arguments in the background which will change my view"; such a man has not faith at all. When, then, Protestants quarrel with us for saying that those who join us must give up all ideas of ever doubting the Church in time to come, they do nothing else but quarrel with us for insisting on the necessity of faith in her. Let them speak plainly; our offense is that of demanding faith in the Holy Catholic Church; it is this, and nothing else. I must insist upon this: faith implies a confidence in a man's mind, that the thing believed is really true; but, if it is once true, it never can be false. If it is true that God became man, what is the meaning of my anticipating a time when perhaps I shall not believe that God became man? this is nothing short of anticipating a time when I shall disbelieve a truth. And if I bargain to be allowed in time to come not to believe, or to doubt, that God became man, I am but asking to be allowed to doubt or disbelieve what I hold to be an eternal truth. I do not see the privilege of such a permission at all, or the meaning of wishing to secure it:—if at present I have no doubt whatever about it, then I am but asking leave to fall into error; if at present I have doubts about it, then I do not believe it at present, that is, I have not faith. But I cannot both really believe it now, and yet look forward to a time when perhaps I shall not believe it; to make provision for future doubt, is to doubt at present. It proves I am not in a fit state to become a Catholic now. I may love by halves, I may obey by halves; I cannot believe by halves: either I have faith, or I have it not.

And so again, when a man has become a Catholic, were he to set about following a doubt which has occurred to him, he has already disbelieved. *I* have not to warn him against losing his faith; he is not merely in danger of losing it, he has lost it; from the nature of the case he has already lost it; he fell from grace at the moment when he deliberately entertained and pursued his doubt. No one can determine to doubt what he is already sure of; but if he is not sure that the Church is from God, he does not believe it. It is not I who forbid him to doubt; he has taken the matter into his own hands when he determined on asking for leave; he has begun, not ended, in unbelief; his very wish, his purpose, is his sin. I do not make it so, it is such from the very state of the case. You sometimes hear, for example, of Catholics falling away, who will tell you it arose from reading the Scriptures, which opened their eyes to the 'unscripturalness," so they speak, of the Church of the Living God. No; Scripture did not make them disbelieve (impossible!); they disbelieved *when* they opened the Bible; they opened it in an unbelieving spirit, and for an unbelieving purpose; they would not have opened it, had they not anticipated—I might say, hoped—that they should find things there inconsistent with Catholic teaching. They begin in self-will and disobedience, and they end in apostasy. This, then, is the direct and obvious reason why the Church cannot allow her children the liberty of doubting the truth of her word. He who really believes in it now, cannot imagine the future discovery of reasons to shake his faith; if he imagines it, he has not faith; and that so many Protestants think it a sort of tyranny in the Church to forbid any children of hers to doubt about her teaching, only shows they do not know what faith is—which is the case; it is a strange idea to them. Let a man cease to inquire, or cease to call himself her child.

This is my first remark, and now I go on to a second. You may easily conceive, my brethren, that they who are entering the Church, or at least those who have entered it, have more than faith; that they have some portion of divine love also. They have heard in the Church of the charity of Him who died for them, and who has given them His Sacraments as the means of conveying the merits of His death to their souls, and they have felt more or less in those poor souls of theirs the beginnings of a responsive charity drawing them to Him. Now, does it stand with a loving trust, better than with faith, for a man to anticipate the possibility of doubting or denying the great mercies in which he is rejoicing? Take an instance; what would you think of a friend whom you loved, who could bargain that, in spite of his present trust in you, he might be allowed some day to doubt you? who, when a thought came into his mind, that you were playing a game with him, or that you were a knave, or a profligate, did not drive it from him with indignation, or laugh it away for its absurdity, but considered that he had an evident right to indulge it, nay, should be wanting in duty to himself, unless he did? Would you think that your friend trifled with truth, that he was unjust to his reason, that he was wanting in manliness, that he was hurting his mind, if he shrank from the thought? or would you not call him cruel and miserable if he did not? For me, my brethren, if he took the latter course, may I never be intimate with so unpleasant a person; suspicious, jealous minds, minds that keep at a distance from me, that insist on their rights, fall back on their own centre, are ever fancying offenses, and are cold, censorious, wayward, and uncertain, these are often to be borne as a cross; but give me for my friend one who will unite heart and hand with me, who will throw himself into my cause and interest, who will take my part when I am attacked, who will be sure beforehand that I am in the right, and, if he is critical, as he may have cause to be toward a being of sin and imperfection, will be so from very love and loyalty, from an anxiety that I should always show to advantage, and a wish that others should love me as heartily as he does. I should not say a friend trusted me, who listened to every idle story against me; and I should like his absence better than his company, if he gravely told me that it was a duty he owed to himself to encourage his misgivings of my honor.

Well, pass on to a higher subject;—could a man be said to trust in God, and to love God, who was familiar with doubts whether there was a God at all, or who bargained that, just as often as he pleased, he might be at liberty to doubt whether God was good, or just or almighty; and who maintained that, unless he did this, he was but a poor slave, that his mind was in bondage, and could render no free acceptable service to his Maker; that the very worship which God approved was one attended with a *caveat*, on the worshipper's part, that he did not promise to render it to-morrow, that he would not answer for himself that some argument might not come to light, which he had never heard before, which would make it a grave moral duty in him to suspend his judgment and his devotion? Why, I should say, my brethren, that that man was worshipping his own mind, his own dear self and not God; that his idea of God was a mere accidental form which his thoughts took at this time or that,—for a long period or a short one, as the case might be,—not an image of the great Eternal Object, but a passing sentiment or imagination which meant nothing at all. I should say, and most men would agree with me, did they choose to give attention to the matter, that the person in question was a very self-conceited, self-wise man, and had neither love, nor faith, nor fear, nor anything supernatural about him; that his pride must be broken, and his heart new-made, before he was capable of any religious act at all. The argument is the same, in its degree, when applied to the Church; she speaks to us as a messenger from God,—how can a man who feels this, who comes to her, who falls at her feet as such, make a reserve, that he may be allowed to doubt her at some future day? Let the world cry out, if it will, that his reason is in fetters; let it pronounce that he is a bigot, unless he reserves his right of doubting; but he knows full well himself that he would be an ingrate and a fool, if he did. Fetters, indeed! yes, "the cords of Adam," the fetters of love, these are what bind him to the Holy Church; he is, with the Apostle, the slave of Christ, the Church's Lord; united (never to part, as he trusts, while life lasts,) to her Sacraments, to her Sacrifices, to her Saints, to the Blessed Mary her advocate, to Jesus, to God.

The truth is, that the world, knowing nothing of the blessings of the Catholic faith, and prophesying nothing but ill concerning it, fancies that a convert, after the first fervor is over, feels nothing but disappointment, weariness, and offense in his new religion, and is secretly desirous of retracing his steps. This is at the root of the alarm and irritation which it manifests at hearing that doubts are incompatible with a Catholic's profession, because it is sure that doubts will come upon him, and then how pitiable will be his state! That there can be peace, and joy, and knowledge, and freedom, and spiritual strength in the Church, is a thought far beyond the world's imagination; for it regards her simply as a frightful conspiracy against the happiness of man, seducing her victims by specious professions, and, when they are once hers, caring nothing for the misery which breaks upon them, so that by any means she may detain them in bondage. Accordingly, it conceives we are in perpetual warfare with our own reason, fierce objections ever rising within us, and we forcibly repressing them. It believes that, after the likeness of a vessel which has met with some accident at sea, we are ever baling out the water which rushes in upon us, and have hard work to keep afloat; we just manage to linger on, either by an unnatural strain on our minds, or by turning them away from the subject of religion. The world disbelieves our doctrines itself, and cannot understand our own believing them. It considers them so strange, that it is quite sure, though we will not confess it, that we are haunted day and night with doubts, and tormented with the apprehension of yielding to them. I really do think it is the world's judgment, that one principal part of a confessor's work is the putting down such misgivings in his penitents. It fancies that the reason is ever rebelling, like the flesh; that doubt, like concupiscence, is elicited by every sight and sound, and that temptation insinuates itself in every page of letter-press, and through the very voice of a Protestant polemic. When it sees a Catholic Priest, it looks hard at him, to make out how much there is of folly, in his composition, and how much of hypocrisy.

But, my dear brethren, if these are your thoughts, you are simply in error. Trust me, rather than the world, when I tell you, that it is no difficult thing for a Catholic to believe; and that unless he grievously mismanages himself, the difficult thing is for him to doubt. He has received a gift which makes faith easy: it is not without an effort, a miserable effort, that any one who has received that gift, unlearns to believe. He does violence to his mind, not in exercising, but in withholding his faith. When objections occur to him, which they may easily do if he lives in the world, they are as odious and unwelcome to him as impure thoughts are to the virtuous. He does certainly shrink from them, he flings them away from him, but why? not in the first instance, because they are dangerous, but because they are cruel and base. His loving

Lord has done everything for him, and has He deserved such a return? *Popule meus, quid feci tibi?* "O my people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I afflicted thee? answer thou me. I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and delivered thee out of the house of slaves; and I sent before thy face Moses, and Aaron, and Mary; I fenced thee in, and planted thee with the choicest vines; and what is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard that I have not done to it?" He has poured on us His grace, He has been with us in our perplexities, He has led us on from one truth to another, He has forgiven us our sins, He has satisfied our reason, He has made faith easy, He has given us His Saints, He shows before us day by day His own Passion; why should I leave Him? What has He ever done to me but good? Why must I re-examine what I have examined once for all? Why must I listen to every idle word which flits past me against Him, on pain of being called a bigot and a slave, when, if I did, I should be behaving to the Most High, as you yourselves, who so call me, would not behave toward a human friend or benefactor? If I am convinced in my reason, and persuaded in my heart, why may I not be allowed to remain unmolested in my worship?

I have said enough on the subject; still there is a third point of view in which it may be useful to consider it. Personal prudence is not the first or second ground for refusing to hear objections to the Church, but a motive it is, and that from the peculiar nature of divine faith, which cannot be treated as an ordinary conviction or belief. Faith is the gift of God, and not a mere act of our own, which we are free to exert when we will. It is quite distinct from an exercise of reason, though it follows upon it. I may feel the force of the argument for the divine origin of the Church; I may see that I ought to believe; and yet I may be unable to believe. This is no imaginary case; there is many a man who has ground enough to believe, who wishes to believe, but who cannot believe. It is always indeed his own fault, for God gives grace to all who ask for it, and use it, but still such is the fact, that conviction is not faith. Take the parallel case of obedience; many a man knows he ought to obey God, and does not and cannot,—through his own fault indeed, but still he cannot; for through grace alone can he obey. Now, faith is not a mere conviction in reason, it is a firm assent, it is a clear certainty greater than any other certainty; and this is wrought in the mind by the grace of God, and by it alone. As, then, men may be convinced, and not act according to their conviction, so may they be convinced, and not believe according to their conviction. They may confess that the argument is against them, that they have nothing to say for themselves, and that to believe is to be happy; and yet, after all, they avow they cannot believe, they do not know why, but they cannot; they acquiesce in unbelief, and they turn away from God and His Church. Their reason is convinced, and their doubts are moral ones, arising in their root from a fault of the will. In a word, the arguments for religion do not compel any one to believe, just as arguments for good conduct do not compel any one to obey. Obedience is the consequence of willing to obey, and faith is the consequence of willing to believe; we may see what is right, whether in matters of faith or obedience, of ourselves, but we cannot will what is right without the grace of God. Here is the difference between other exercises of reason, and arguments for the truth of religion. It requires no act of faith to assent to the truth that two and two make four; we cannot help assenting to it; and hence there is no merit in assenting to it; but there is merit in believing that the Church is from God; for though there are abundant reasons to prove it to us, yet we can, without an absurdity, quarrel with the conclusion; we may complain that it is not clearer, we may suspend our assent, we may doubt about it, if we will, and grace alone can turn a bad will into a good one.

And now you see why a Catholic dare not in prudence attend to such objections as are brought against his faith; he has no fear of their proving that the Church does not come from God, but he is afraid, if he listened to them without reason, lest God should punish him by the loss of his supernatural faith. This is one cause of that miserable state of mind, to which I have already alluded, in which men would fain be Catholics, and are not. They have trifled with conviction, they have listened to arguments against what they knew to be true, and a deadness of mind has fallen on them; faith has failed them, and, as time goes on, they betray in their words and their actions, the Divine judgment, with which they are visited. They become careless and unconcerned, or restless and unhappy, or impatient of contradiction; ever asking advice and quarrelling with it when given; not attempting to answer the arguments urged against them, but simply not believing. This is the whole of their case, they do not believe. And then it is quite an accident what becomes of them; perhaps they continue on in this perplexed and comfortless state, lingering about the Church, yet not of her; not knowing what they believe and what they do not, like blind men, or men deranged, who are deprived of the eye, whether of body or mind, and cannot guide themselves in consequence; ever exciting hopes of a return, and ever disappointing them;—or, if they are men of more vigorous minds, they launch forward in a course of infidelity, not really believing less, as they proceed, for from the first they believed nothing, but taking up, as time goes on, more and more consistent forms of error, till sometimes, if a free field is given them, they even develop into atheism. Such is the end of those who, under the pretence of inquiring after truth, trifle with conviction.

Here then are some of the reasons why the Catholic Church cannot consistently allow her children to doubt the divinity and the truth of her words. Mere investigation indeed into the grounds of our faith is not to doubt; nor is it doubting to consider the arguments urged against it, when there is good reason for doing so; but I am speaking of a real doubt, or a wanton entertainment of objections. Such a procedure the Church denounces, and not only for the reasons which I have assigned, but because it would be a plain abandonment of her office and character to act otherwise. How can she, who has the prerogative of infallibility, allow her children to doubt of her gift? It would be a simple inconsistency in her, who is the sure oracle of truth and messenger of heaven, to look with indifference on rebels to her authority. She simply does what the Apostles did before her, whom she has succeeded. "He that despiseth," says St. Paul, "despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given in us His Holy Spirit." And St. John, "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth us not; by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Take, again, an instance from the Old Testament:—When Elias was taken up into heaven, Eliseus was the only witness of the miracle; on his coming back then to the sons of the Prophets, they doubted what had become of his master, and wished to search for him; and, though they acknowledged Eliseus as his successor, they in this instance refused to take his word on the subject. Eliseus had struck the waters of Jordan, they had divided, and he had passed over; here, surely, was ground enough for faith, and accordingly "the sons of the Prophets at Jericho, who were over against him, seeing it, said, The spirit of Elias hath rested upon Eliseus; and they came to meet him, and worshipped him, falling to the ground." What could they require more? they confessed that Eliseus had the spirit of his great master, and, in confessing it, they implied that that master was taken away; yet, they proceed, from infirmity of mind, to make a request indicative of doubt: "Behold, there are with thy servants fifty strong men, that can go and search for thy master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." Now here was a request to follow up a doubt into an inquiry; did Eliseus allow it? he knew perfectly well that the inquiry would but end, as it really did end, in confirmation of the truth, but it was indulging a wrong spirit to engage in it, and he would not allow it. These religious men were, as he would feel, strangely inconsistent: they were doubting his word whom they had just now worshipped as a Prophet, and, not only so, but they were doubting his supreme authority, for they implied that Elias was still among them. Accordingly he forbade their request; "He said, Send not." This is what the world would call stifling an inquiry; it was, forsooth, tyrannical and oppressive to oblige them to take on his word what they might ascertain for themselves: yet he could not do otherwise without being unfaithful to his divine mission, and sanctioning them in a fault. It is true when "they pressed him, he consented, and said, Send"; but we must not suppose this to be more than a condescension to their weakness, or a concession in displeasure, like that which Almighty God gave to Balaam, who pressed his request in a similar way. When Balaam asked to go with the ancients of Moab, God said, "Thou shalt not go with them"; when Balaam asked Him "once more," "God said to him, Arise and go with them"; then it is added, "Balaam went with them, and God was angry." Here, in like manner, the prophet said, Send; "and they sent fifty men, and they sought three days, but found him not," yet though the inquiry did but prove that Elias was removed, Eliseus showed no satisfaction at it, even when it had confirmed his authority: but "he said to them, Said I not to you, Send not?" It is thus that the Church ever forbids inquiry in those who already acknowledge her authority; but if they will inquire, she cannot hinder it; but they are not justified in doing so.

And now I think you see, my brethren, why inquiry precedes faith, and does not follow it. You inquired before you joined the Church; you were satisfied, and God rewarded you with the grace of faith; were you now determined to inquire further, you would lead us to think you had lost it again, for inquiry and faith are in their very nature incompatible. I will add, what is very evident, that no other religious body has a right to demand such an exercise of faith in it, and a right to forbid you further inquiry, but the Catholic Church; and for this simple reason, that no other body even claims to be infallible, let alone the proof of such a claim. Here is the defect at first starting, which disqualifies them, one and all, from ever competing with the Church of God. The sects about us, so far from demanding your faith, actually call on you to inquire and to doubt freely about their own merits; they protest that they are but voluntary associations, and would be sorry to be taken for anything else; they beg and pray you not to mistake their preachers for anything more than mere sinful men, and they invite you to take the Bible with you to their sermons, and to judge for yourselves whether their doctrine is in accordance with it. Then, as to the Established Religion, grant that there are those in it who forbid inquiry into its claims; yet still, dare they maintain that it is infallible? If they do not (and no one does), how can they forbid inquiry about it, or claim for it the absolute faith of any of its members? Faith under these circumstances is not really faith, but obstinacy. Nor do they commonly venture to demand it; they will say, negatively, "Do not inquire"; but they cannot say positively, "Have faith"; for in whom are their members to have faith? of whom can they say, whether individual or collection of men, "He or they are gifted with infallibility, and cannot mislead us"? Therefore, when pressed to explain themselves, they ground their duty of continuance in their communion, not on faith in it, but on attachment to it, which is a very different thing; utterly different, for there are very many reasons why they should feel a very great liking for the religion in which they have been brought up. Its portions of Catholic teaching, its "decency and order," the pure and beautiful English of its prayers, its literature, the piety found among its members, the influence of superiors and friends, its historical associations, its domestic character, the charm of a country life, the remembrance of past years,—there is all this and much more to attach the mind to the national worship. But attachment is not trust, nor is to obey the same as to look up to, and to rely upon: nor do I think that any thoughtful or educated man can simply believe or confide in the *word* of the Established Church. I never met any such person who did, or said he did, and I do not think that such a person is possible. Its defenders would believe if they could; but their highest confidence is qualified by a misgiving. They obey, they are silent before the voice of their superiors, but they do not profess to believe. Nothing is clearer than this, that if faith in God's word is required of us for salvation, the Catholic Church is the only medium by which we can exercise it.

And now, my brethren, who are not Catholics, perhaps you will tell me, that, if all inquiry is to cease when you become Catholics, you ought to be very sure that the Church is from God before you join it. You speak truly; no one should enter the Church without a firm purpose of taking her word in all matters of doctrine and morals, and that, on the ground of her coming directly from the God of Truth. You must look the matter in the face, and count the cost. If you do not come in this spirit, you may as well not come at all; high and low, learned and ignorant, must come to learn. If you are right as far as this, you cannot go very wrong; you have the foundation; but, if you come in any other temper, you had better wait till you have got rid of it. You must come, I say, to the Church to learn; you must come, not to bring your own notions to her, but with the intention of ever being a learner; you must come with the intention of taking her for your portion and of never leaving her. Do not come as an experiment; do not come as you would take sittings in a chapel, or tickets for a lecture-room; come to her as to your home, to the school of your souls, to the Mother of Saints, and to the vestibule of heaven. On the other hand do not distress yourselves with thoughts whether, when you have joined her, your faith will last; this is a suggestion of your enemy to hold you back. He who has begun a good work in you, will perfect it; He who has chosen you, will be faithful to you; put your cause into His hand, wait upon Him, and you will surely persevere. What good work will you ever begin, if you bargain first to see the end of it? If you wish to do all at once, you will do nothing; he has done half the work, who has begun it well; you will not gain your Lord's praise at the final reckoning by hiding His talent. No; when He brings you from error to truth, He will have done the more difficult work (if aught is difficult to Him), and surely He will preserve you from returning from truth to error. Take the experience of those who have gone before you in the same course; they had many fears that their faith would fail them, before taking the great step, but those fears vanished on their taking it; they had fears, before they received the grace of faith, lest, after receiving it, they should lose it again, but no fears (except on the ground of their general frailness) after it was actually given them.

Be convinced in your reason that the Catholic Church is a teacher sent to you from God, and it is enough. I do not wish you to join her, till you are. If you are half convinced, pray for a full conviction, and wait till you have it. It is better, indeed, to come quickly, but better slowly than carelessly; and sometimes, as the proverb goes, the more haste, the worse speed. Only make yourselves sure that the delay is not from any fault of yours, which you can remedy. God deals with us very differently; conviction comes slowly to some men, quickly to others; in some it is the result of much thought and many reasonings, in others of a sudden illumination. One man is convinced at once, as in the instance described by St. Paul: "If all prophesy," he says, speaking of exposition of doctrine, "and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. The secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and say that God is among you of a truth." The case is the same now; some men are converted merely by entering a Catholic church; others are converted by reading one book; others by one doctrine. They feel the weight of their sins, and they see that that religion must come from God, which alone has the means of forgiving them. Or they are touched and overcome by the evident sanctity, beauty, and (as I may say) fragrance of the Catholic Religion. Or they long for a guide amid the strife of tongues; and the very doctrine of the Church about faith, which is so hard to many, is conviction to them. Others, again, hear many objections to the Church, and follow out the whole subject far and wide; conviction can scarcely come to them except as at the end of a long inquiry. As in a court of justice, one man's innocence may be proved at once, another's is the result of a careful investigation; one has nothing in his conduct or character to explain, against another there are many unfavorable presumptions at first sight; so Holy Church presents herself very differently to different minds who are contemplating her from without. God deals with them differently; but, if they are faithful to their light, at last, in their own time, though it may be a different time to each, He brings them to that one and the same state of mind, very definite and not to be mistaken which we call *conviction*. They will have no doubt, whatever difficulties may still attach to the subject, that the Church is from God; they may not be able to answer this objection or that, but they will be certain in spite of it.

This is a point which should ever be kept in view: conviction is a state of mind, and it is something beyond and distinct from the mere arguments of which it is the result; it does not vary with their strength or their number. Arguments lead to a conclusion, and when the arguments are stronger, the conclusion is clearer; but conviction may be felt as strongly in consequence of a clear conclusion, as of one which is clearer. A man may be so sure upon six reasons, that he does not need a seventh, nor would feel surer if he had it. And so as regards the Catholic Church: men are convinced in very various ways,—what convinces one, does not convince another; but this is an accident; the time comes anyhow, sooner or later, when a man ought to be convinced, and is convinced, and then he is bound not to wait for any more arguments, though more arguments be producible. He will find himself in a condition when he may even refuse to hear more arguments in behalf of the Church; he does not wish to read or think more on the subject; his mind is quite made up. In such a case it is his duty to join the Church at once; he must not delay; let him be cautious in council, but prompt in execution. This it is that makes Catholics so anxious about him: it is not that they wish him to be precipitate; but knowing the temptations which the evil one ever throws in our way, they are lovingly anxious for his soul, lest he has come to the point of conviction, and is passing it, and is losing his chance of conversion. If so, it may never return; God has not chosen every one to salvation: it is a rare gift to be a Catholic; it may be offered to us once in our lives and never again; and, if we have not seized on the "accepted time," nor know "in our day the things which are for our peace," oh, the misery for us! What shall we be able to say when death comes, and we are not converted, and it is directly and immediately our own doing that we are not?

"Wisdom preacheth abroad, she uttereth her voice in the streets. How long, ye little ones, love ye childishness, and fools covet what is hurtful to them, and the unwise hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will bring forth to you my Spirit, and I will show my words unto you. Because I have called and ye refused, I stretched out my hand, and there was none who regarded, and ye despised all my counsel and neglected my chidings; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared; when a sudden storm shall rush on you, and destruction shall thicken as a tempest, when tribulation and straitness shall come upon you. Then shall they call on me, and I will not hear; they shall rise betimes, but they shall not find me; for that they hated discipline, and took not on them the fear of the Lord, nor acquiesced in my counsel, but made light of my reproof, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

Oh, the misery for us, as many of us as shall be in that number! Oh, the awful thought for all eternity! Oh, the remorseful sting, "I was called, I might have answered, and I did not!" And oh, the blessedness, if we can look back on the time of trial, when friends implored and enemies scoffed, and say,—The misery for me, which would have been, had I not followed on, had I hung back, when Christ called! Oh, the utter confusion of mind, the wreck of faith and opinion, the blackness and void, the dreary scepticism, the hopelessness, which would have been my lot, the pledge of the outer darkness to come, had I been afraid to follow Him! I have lost friends, I have lost the world, but I have gained Him, who gives in Himself houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands a hundredfold; I have lost the perishable, and gained the Infinite; I have lost time, and I have gained eternity; "O Lord, my God, I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast broken my bonds. I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call on the Name of the Lord."

MYSTERIES OF NATURE AND OF GRACE.

I AM going to assert, what some persons, my brethren, those especially whom it most concerns, will not hesitate to call a great paradox; but which, nevertheless, I consider to be most true, and likely to approve itself to you more and more, the oftener you turn your thoughts to the subject, and likely to be confirmed in the religious history of this country as time proceeds. It is this:—that it is quite as difficult, and quite as easy, to believe that there is a God in heaven, as to believe that the Catholic Church is His oracle and minister on earth. I do not mean to say, that it is really difficult to believe in God (God Himself forbid!); no; but that belief in God and belief in His Church stand on the same kind of foundation; that the proof of the one truth is like the proof of the other truth, and that the objections which may be made to the one are like the objections which may be made to the other; and that, as right reason and sound judgment overrule objections to the being of a God, so do they supersede and set aside objections to the divine mission of the Church. And I consider that, when once a man has a real hold of the great doctrine that there is a God, in its true meaning and bearings, then (provided there be no disturbing cause, no peculiarities in his circumstances, involuntary ignorance, or the like), he will be led on without an effort, as by a natural continuation of that belief, to believe also in the Catholic Church as God's messenger or Prophet, dismissing as worthless the objections which are adducible against the latter truth, as he dismisses objections adducible against the former. And I consider, on the other hand, that when a man does not believe in the Church, then (the same accidental impediments being put aside as before), there is nothing in reason to keep him from doubting the being of a God.

The state of the case is this;—every one spontaneously embraces the doctrine of the existence of God, as a first principle, and a necessary assumption. It is not so much proved to him, as borne in upon his mind irresistibly, as a truth which it does not occur to him, nor is possible for him, to doubt; so various and so abundant is the witness for it contained in the experience and the conscience of every one. He cannot unravel the process, or put his finger on the independent arguments, which conspire together to create in him the certainty which he feels;

but certain of it he is, and he has neither the temptation nor the wish to doubt it, and he could, should need arise, at least point to the books or the persons from whence he could obtain the various formal proofs on which the being of a God rests, and the irrefragable demonstration thence resulting against the freethinker and the sceptic. At the same time he certainly would find, if he was in a condition to pursue the subject himself, that unbelievers had the advantage of him so far as this,—that there were a number of objections to the doctrine which he could not satisfy, questions which he could not solve, mysteries which he could neither conceive nor explain; he would perceive that the body of proof itself might be more perfect and complete than it is; he would not find indeed anything to invalidate that proof, but many things which might embarrass him in discussion, or afford a plausible, though not a real, excuse for doubting about it.

The case is pretty much the same as regards the great moral law of God. We take it for granted, and rightly; what could we do, where should we be, without it? how could we conduct ourselves, if there were no difference between right and wrong, and if one action were as acceptable to our Creator as another? Impossible! if anything is true and divine, the rule of conscience is such, and it is frightful to suppose the contrary. Still, in spite of this, there is quite room for objectors to insinuate doubts about its authority or its enunciations; and where an inquirer is cold and fastidious, or careless, or wishes an excuse for disobedience, it is easy for him to perplex and disorder his reason, till he begins to question whether what he has all his life thought to be sins, are really such, and whether conscientiousness is not in fact a superstition.

And in like manner as regards the Catholic Church; she bears upon her the tokens of divinity, which come home to any mind at once, which has not been possessed by prejudice, and educated in suspicion. It is not so much a process of inquiry as an instantaneous recognition, on which the mind believes. Moreover, it is possible to analyze the arguments and draw up in form the great proof, on which her claims rest; but, on the other hand, it is quite possible also for opponents to bring forward certain imposing objections, which, though they do not really interfere with those claims, still are specious in themselves, and are sufficient to arrest and entangle the mind, and to keep it back from a fair examination of the proof, and of the vast array of arguments of which it consists. I am alluding to such objections as the following:—How can Almighty God be Three and yet One; how can Christ be God and yet man; how can He be at once in the Blessed Sacrament under the form of Bread and Wine, and yet in heaven; how is the doctrine of eternal punishment consistent with the Infinite Mercy of God;—or, again, how is it that, if the Catholic Church be from God, the gift of belonging to her is not, and has not been, granted to all men; how is it that so many apparently good men are external to her; why does she pay such honor to the Blessed Virgin and all Saints; how is it that, since the Bible also is from God, it admits of being quoted in opposition to her teaching; in a word, how is it, if she is from God, that everything which she does and says, is not perfectly intelligible to man, intelligible, not only to man in general, but to the reason and judgment and taste of every individual of the species, taken one by one?

Now, whatever my anxiety may be about the next generation, I trust I need at present have none in insisting, before a congregation however mixed, on the mysteries or difficulties which attach to the doctrine of God's existence, and which must be of necessity acquiesced in by every one who believes it. I trust, and am sure, that as yet it is safe even to put before one who is not a Catholic some points which he is obliged to accept, whether he will or no, when he confesses that there is a God. I am going to do so, not wantonly, but with a definite object, by way of showing him, that he is not called on to believe anything in the Catholic Church more strange or inexplicable than he already admits when he believes in a God; so that, if God exists in spite of the difficulties attending the doctrine, so the Church may be of divine origin, though that truth also has its difficulties;—nay, I might even say, the Church is divine, *because* of those difficulties; for the difficulties which exist in the doctrine that there is a Divine Being, do but give countenance and protection to parallel difficulties in the doctrine that there is a Catholic Church. If there be mysteriousness in her teaching, this does but show that she proceeds from Him, who is Himself Mystery, in the most simple and elementary ideas which we have of Him, whom we cannot contemplate at all except as One who is absolutely greater than our reason, and utterly strange to our imagination.

First, then, consider that Almighty God had no beginning, and that this is necessary from the nature of the case, and inevitable. For if (to suppose what is absurd) the maker of the visible world was himself made by some other maker, and that maker again by another, you must anyhow come at last to a first Maker who had no maker, that is, who had no beginning. If you will not admit this, you will be forced to say that the world was not made at all, or made itself, and itself had no beginning, which is more wonderful still; for it is much easier to conceive that a Spirit, such as God is, existed from eternity, than that this material world was eternal. Unless, then, we are resolved to doubt that we live in a world of beings at all, unless we doubt our own existence, if we do but grant that there is something or other now existing, it follows at once, that there must be something or other which has always existed, and never had a beginning. This, then, is certain from the necessity of the case; but can there be a more overwhelming mystery than it is? To say that a being had no beginning seems a contradiction in terms; it is a mystery as great, or rather greater, than any in the Catholic Faith. For instance, it is the teaching of the Church that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, yet that there is but one God; this is simply incomprehensible to us, but at least, so far as this, it involves no self-contradiction, because God is not Three and One in the same sense, but He is Three in one sense and One in another; on the contrary, to say that any being has no beginning, is like a statement which means nothing and is an absurdity. And so again, Protestants think that the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence cannot be true, because, if so (as they argue), our Lord's Body is in two places at once, in Heaven and upon the Altar, and this they say is an impossibility. Now, Catholics do not see that it is impossible at all, that our Lord should be in Heaven, yet on the Altar; they do not indeed see *how* it can be both, but they do not see *why* it should not be; there are many things which exist, though we do not know *how;* —do we know *how* anything exists?—there are many truths which are not less truths because we cannot picture them to ourselves or conceive them; but at any rate, the Catholic doctrine concerning the Real Presence is not more mysterious than how Almighty God can exist, yet never have come into existence. We do not know what is meant by saying that Almighty God will have no end, but still there is nothing here to distress or confuse our reason, but it distorts our mental sight and makes our head giddy to have to say (what nevertheless we cannot help saying), that He had no beginning. Reason brings it home clearly to us, yet reason again starts at it; reason starts back from its own discovery, yet is obliged to endure it. It discovers, it shrinks, it submits; such is the state of the case, but, I say, they who are obliged to bow their neck to this mystery, need not be so sensitive about the mysteries of the Catholic Church.

Then think of this again, which, though not so baffling to the reason, still is most bewildering to the imagination;—that, if the Almighty had no beginning He must have lived a whole eternity by Himself. What an awful thought! for us, our happiness lies in looking up to some object, or pursuing some end; we, poor mortal men, cannot understand a prolonged rest, except as a sort of sloth and self-forgetfulness; we are wearied if we meditate for one short hour; what, then, is meant when it is said, that He, the Great God, passed infinite ages by Himself? What was the end of His being? He was His own end; how incomprehensible! And since He lived a whole eternity by Himself, He might, had

He so willed, never have created anything; and then from eternity to eternity there would have been none but He, none to witness Him, none to contemplate Him, none to adore and praise Him. How oppressive to think of! that there should have been no space, no time, no succession, no variation, no progression, no scope, no termination. One Infinite Being from first to last, and nothing else! And why He? Which is the less painful to our imagination, the idea of only one Being in existence, or of nothing at all? O my brethren, here is mystery without mitigation, without relief! how severe and frightful! The mysteries of Revelation, the Catholic dogmas, inconceivable as they are, are most gracious, most loving, laden with mercy and consolation to us, not only sublime, but touching and winning;—such is the doctrine that God became man. Incomprehensible it is, and we can but adore, when we hear that the Almighty Being, of whom I have been speaking, "who inhabiteth eternity," has taken flesh and blood of a Virgin's veins, lain in a Virgin's womb, been suckled at a Virgin's breast, been obedient to human parents, worked at an humble trade, been despised by His own, been buffeted and scourged by His creatures, been nailed hand and foot to a Cross, and has died a malefactor's death; and that now, under the form of Bread, He should lie upon our Altars, and suffer Himself to be hidden in a small tabernacle!

Most incomprehensible, but still, while the thought overwhelms our imagination, it also overpowers our heart; it is the most subduing, affecting, piercing thought which can be pictured to us. It thrills through us, and draws our tears, and abases us, and melts us into love and affection, when we dwell upon it. O most tender and compassionate Lord! You see, He puts out of our sight that mysteriousness of His, which is only awful and terrible; He insists not on His past eternity; He would not scare and trouble His poor children, when at length He speaks to them; no, He does but surround Himself with His own infinite bountifulness and compassion; He bids His Church tell us only of His mysterious condescension. Still our reason, prying, curious reason, searches out for us those prior and more austere mysteries, which are attached to His Being, and He suffers us to find them out. He suffers us, for He knows that that same reason, though it recoils from them, must put up with them; He knows that they will be felt by it to be clear, inevitable truths, appalling as they are. He suffers it to discover them, in order that, both by the parallel and by the contrast between what reason infers and what the Church reveals, we may be drawn on from the awful discoveries of the one to the gracious announcements of the other; and in order, too, that the rejection of Revelation may be its own punishment, and that they who stumble at the Catholic mysteries may be dashed back upon the adamantine rocks which base the throne of the Everlasting, and may wrestle with the stern conclusions of reason, since they refuse the bright consolations of faith.

And now another difficulty, which reason discovers, yet cannot explain. Since the world exists, and did not ever exist, there was a time when the Almighty changed that state of things, which had been from all eternity, for another state. It was wonderful that He should be by Himself for an eternity; moreover, it had been wonderful, had He never changed it; but it is wonderful, too, that He did change it. It is wonderful that, being for an eternity alone, He should ever pass from that solitary state, and surround Himself with millions upon millions of living beings. A state which had been from eternity might well be considered unchangeable; yet it ceased, and another superseded it. What end could the All-blessed have had in beginning to create, and in determining to pass a second eternity so differently from the first? This mystery, my brethren, will tend to reconcile us, I think, to the difficulty of a question sometimes put to us by unbelievers, viz., if the Catholic Religion is from God, why was it set up so late in the world's day? Why did some thousands of years pass before Christ came and His gifts were poured upon the race of man? But, surely, it is not so strange that the Judge of men should have changed His dealings toward them "in the midst of the years," as that He should have changed the history of the heavens in the midst of eternity. If creation had a beginning at a certain date, why should not redemption? And if we be forced to believe, whether we will or no, that there was once an innovation upon the course of things on high, and that the universe arose out of nothing, and if, even when the earth was created, still it remained "empty and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep," what so great marvel is it, that there was a fixed period in God's inscrutable counsels, during which there was "a bond fastened upon all people," and a "web drawn over them," and then a date, at which the bond of thraldom was broken, and the web of error was unravelled?

Well, let us suppose the innovation decreed in the eternal purpose of the Most High, and that creation is to be; of whom, my brethren, shall it consist? Doubtless of beings who can praise and bless Him, who can admire His perfections, and obey His will, who will be least unworthy to minister about His Throne, and to keep Him company. Look around, and say how far facts bear out this anticipation. There is but one race of intelligent beings, as far as we have experience by nature, and a thousand races which cannot love or worship Him who made them. Millions upon millions enjoy their brief span of life, but man alone can look up to heaven; and what is man, many though he be, what is he in the presence of so innumerable a multitude? Consider the abundance of beasts that range the earth, of birds under the firmament of heaven, of fish in the depths of the ocean, and, above all, the exuberant varieties of insects, which baffle our enumeration by their minuteness, and our powers of conception by their profusion. Doubtless they all show forth the glory of the Creator, as do the elements, "fire, hail, snow, and ice, stormy winds, which fulfil His word." Yet not one of them has a soul, not one of them knows who made it, or that it is made, not one can render Him any proper service, not one can love Him. Indeed how far does the whole world come short in all respects of what it might be! It is not even possessed of created excellence in fulness. It is stamped with imperfection; everything indeed is good in its kind, for God could create nothing otherwise: but how much more fully might He have poured His glory and infused His grace into it, how much more beautiful and divine a world might He have made, than that which, after an eternal silence, He summoned into being! Let reason answer, I repeat,—Why is it that He did not surround Himself with spiritual intelligences, and animate every material atom with a soul? Why made He not the very footstool of His Throne and the pavement of His Temple of an angelic nature, of beings who could praise and bless Him, while they did Him menial service? Set man's wit and man's imagination to the work of devising a world, and you would see, my brethren, what a far more splendid design he would submit for it, than met the good pleasure of the Omnipotent and All-wise. Ambitious architect he would have been, if called to build the palace of the Lord of all, in which every single part would have been the best conceivable, the colors all the brightest, the materials the most costly, and the lineaments the most perfect. Pass from man's private fancies and ideas, and fastidious criticisms on the vast subject; come to facts which are before our eyes, and report what meets them. We see a universe, material for the most part and corruptible, fashioned indeed by laws of infinite skill, and betokening an All-wise Hand, but lifeless and senseless; huge globes, hurled into space, and moving mechanically; subtle influences, penetrating into the most hidden corners and pores of the world, as quick and keen as thought, yet as helpless as the clay from which thought has departed. And next, life without sense; myriads of trees and plants, "the grass of the field," beautiful to the eye, but perishable and worthless in the sight of heaven. And then, when at length we discover sense as well as life, what, I repeat, do we see but a greater mystery still? We behold the spectacle of brute nature; of impulses, feelings, propensities, passions, which in us are ruled or repressed by a superintending reason, but from which, when ungovernable, we shrink, as fearful and hateful, because in us they would be sin. Millions of irrational creatures surround us, and it would seem as though the Creator had left part of His work in its original chaos, so monstrous are these beings, which move and feel and act without reflection and without principle. To matter He has given laws; He has divided the moist and the dry, the heavy and the rare, the light and the dark; He has "placed the sand as a boundary for the sea, a perpetual precept which it shall not pass." He has tamed the elements, and made them servants of the universal good; but the brute beasts pass to and fro in their wildness and their isolation, no yoke on their neck or "bit in their lips," the enemies of all they meet, yet without the capacity of self-love. They live on each other's flesh by an original necessity of their being; their eyes, their teeth, their claws, their muscles, their voice, their walk, their structure within, all speak of violence and blood. They seem made to inflict pain; they rush on their prey with fierceness, and devour it with greediness. There is scarce a passion or a feeling which is sin in man, but is found brute and irresponsible in them. Rage, wanton cruelty, hatred, sullenness, jealousy, revenge, cunning, malice, envy, lust, vainglory, gluttony, each has its representative; and say, O theistical philosopher of this world, who wouldst fain walk by reason only, and scornest the Catholic faith, is it not marvellous, or explain it, if thou canst, that the All-wise and All-good should have poured over the face of His fair creation these rude and inchoate existences, to look like sinners, though they be not; and these too created before man, perhaps for an untold period, and dividing the earth with him since, and the actual lords of a great portion of it even now?

The crowning work of God is man; he is the flower and perfection of creation, and made to serve and worship his Creator; look at him then, O Sages, who scoff at the revealed word, scrutinize him, and say in sincerity, is he a fit offering to present to the great God? I must not speak of sin; you will not acknowledge the term, or will explain it away; yet consider man as he is found in the world, and—owning, as you must own, that the many do not act by rule or principle, and that few give any honor to their Maker—seeing, as you see, that enmities, frauds, cruelties, oppressions, injuries, excesses are almost the constituents of human life—knowing too the wonderful capabilities of man, yet their necessary frustration in so brief an existence,—can you venture to say that the Church's yoke is heavy, when you yourselves, viewing the Universe from end to end, are compelled, by the force of reason, to submit your reason to the confession that God has created nothing perfect, a world of order which is dead and corruptible, a world of immortal spirits which is in rebellion?

I come, then, to this conclusion:—if I must submit my reason to mysteries, it is not much matter whether it is a mystery more or a mystery less, when faith anyhow is the very essence of all religion, when the main difficulty to an inquirer is firmly to hold that there is a Living God, in spite of the darkness which surrounds Him, the Creator, Witness, and Judge of men. When once the mind is broken in, as it must be, to the belief of a Power above it, when once it understands, that it is not itself the measure of all things in heaven and earth, it will have little difficulty in going forward. I do not say it will, or can, go on to other truths, without conviction; I do not say it ought to believe the Catholic faith without grounds and motives; but I say that, when once it believes in God, the great obstacle to faith has been taken away,—a proud, self-sufficient spirit. When once a man really, with the eyes of his soul and by the power of divine grace, recognizes his Creator, he has passed a line; that has happened to him which cannot happen twice; he has bent his stiff neck, and triumphed over himself. If he believes that God has no beginning, why not believe that He is Three yet One? if he owns that God created space, why not own also that He can cause a body to subsist without dependence on place? if he is obliged to grant that God created all things out of nothing, why doubt His power to change the substance of bread into the Body of His Son? It is as strange that, after an eternal rest, He should begin to create, as that, when He had once created, He should take on Himself a created nature; it is as strange that man should be allowed to fall so low, as we see before our eyes in so many dreadful instances, as that Angels and Saints should be exalted even to religious honors; it is as strange that such large families in the animal world should be created without souls and subject to vanity, as that one creature, the Blessed Mother of God, should be exalted over all the rest; as strange, that the book of nature should sometimes seem to vary from the rule of conscience or the conclusions of reason, as that the Church's Scriptures should admit of being interpreted in opposition to her Tradition. And if it shocks a religious mind to doubt of the being of the All-wise and All-good God, on the ground of the mysteries in Nature, why may it not shrink also from using the revealed mysteries as an argument against Revelation?

And now, my dear brethren, who are as yet external to the Church, if I have brought you as far as this, I really do not see why I have not brought you on to make your submission to her. Can you deliberately sit down amid the bewildering mysteries of creation, when a refuge is held out to you, in which reason is rewarded for its faith by the fulfilment of its hopes? Nature does not exempt you from the trial of believing, but it gives you nothing in return; it does but disappoint you. You must submit your reason anyhow; you are not in better circumstances if you turn from the Church; you merely do not secure what you have already sought in nature in vain. The simple question to be decided is one of fact, has a revelation been given? You lessen, not increase, your difficulties by receiving it. It comes to you recommended and urged upon you by the most favorable anticipations of reason. The very difficulties of nature make it likely that a revelation should be made; the very mysteries of creation call for some act on the part of the Creator, by which those mysteries shall be alleviated to you or compensated. One of the greatest of the perplexities of nature is this very one, that the Creator should have left you to yourselves. You know there is a God, yet you know your own ignorance of Him, of His will, of your duties, of your prospects. A revelation would be the greatest of possible boons which could be vouchsafed to you. After all, you do not know, you only conclude that there is a God; you see Him not, you do but hear of Him. He acts under a veil; He is on the point of manifesting Himself to you at every turn, yet He does not. He has impressed on your hearts anticipations of His majesty; in every part of creation has He left traces of His presence and given glimpses of His glory; you come up to the spot, He has been there, but He is gone. He has taught you His law, unequivocally indeed, but by deduction and by suggestion, not by direct command. He has always addressed you circuitously, by your inward sense, by the received opinion, by the events of life, by vague traditions, by dim histories; but as if of set purpose, and by an evident law, He never actually appears to your longing eyes or your weary heart. He never confronts you with Himself. What can be meant by all this? a spiritual being abandoned by its Creator! there must doubtless be some awful and all-wise reason for it; still a sore trial it is: so sore, surely, that you must gladly hail the news of His interference to remove or diminish it.

The news then of a revelation, far from suspicious, is borne in upon our hearts by the strongest presumptions of reason in its behalf. It is hard to believe that it has not been given, as indeed the conduct of mankind has ever shown. You cannot help expecting it from the hands of the All-merciful, unworthy as you feel yourselves of it. It is not that you can claim it, but that He inspires hope of it; it is not you that are worthy of the gift, but it is the gift which is worthy of your Creator. It is so urgently probable, that little evidence is required for it, even though but little were given. Evidence that God has spoken you must have, else were you a prey to impostures; but its extreme likelihood allows you, were it necessary, to dispense with all proof that is not barely sufficient for your purpose. The very fact, I say, that there is a Creator, and a hidden one, powerfully bears you on and sets you down at the very threshold of revelation, and leaves you there looking up earnestly for divine tokens that a revelation has been made.

Do you go with me as far as this, that a revelation is probable? well then, a second remark, and I have done. It is this,—the teaching of the Church manifestly is that revelation. Why should it not be? This mark has she upon her at very first sight, that she is unlike every other profession of religion. Were she God's Prophet or Messenger, she would be distinctive in her characteristics, isolated, and special; and so she is. She is one, not only in herself, but in contrast to everything else: she has no relationship with any other body. And hence, too, you see the question lies between the Church and no divine messenger at all; there is no revelation given us, unless she is the organ of it, for where else is there a Prophet to be found? The anticipation, which I have been urging, has failed, the probability has been falsified, if she be not that Prophet of God. Not that this conclusion is an absurdity, for you cannot take it for granted that your hope of a revelation will be fulfilled; but in whatever degree it is probable that it will be fulfilled, in that degree it is probable that the Church, and nothing else, is the means of fulfilling it. Nothing else; for you cannot believe in your heart that this or that Sect, that this or that Establishment is, in its teaching and its commands, the oracle of the Most High. I know you cannot say in your heart, "I believe this or that, because the English Establishment or the Scotch declares that it is true." Nor could you, I am sure, trust the Russian hierarchy, or the Nestorian, or the Eutychian as speaking from God; at the utmost you might, if you were learned in these matters, look on them as venerable depositories of historical matter, and witnesses of past ages. You would exercise your judgment and criticism on what they said, and would never think of taking their word as decisive; they are in no sense Prophets, Oracles, Judges, of supernatural truth; and the contrast between them and the Catholic Church is a preliminary evidence in her favor.

A Prophet is one who comes from God, who speaks with authority, who is ever one and the same, who is precise and decisive in his statements, who is equal to successive difficulties, and can smite and overthrow error. Such has the Catholic Church shown herself in her history, such is she at this day. She alone has had the divine spell of controlling the reason of man, and of eliciting faith in her word from high and low, educated and ignorant, restless and dull-minded. Even those who are alien to her, and whom she does not move to obedience, she moves to respect and admiration. The most profound thinkers and the most sagacious politicians predict her future triumphs, while they marvel at her past. Her enemies are frightened at the sight of her, and have no better mode of warfare against her than that of blackening her with slanders, or of driving her into the wilderness. To see her is to recognize her; her look and bearing is the evidence of her royal lineage. True, her tokens might be clearer than they are; I grant it; she might have been set up in Adam, and not in Peter; she might have embraced the whole family of man; she might have been the instrument of inwardly converting all hearts; she might have had no scandals within or misfortunes without; she might, in short, have been, I repeat, a heaven on earth; but, I repeat, does she not show as glorious in our sight as a creature, as her God does as the Creator? If He does not display the highest possible tokens of His presence in nature, why should His Messenger display such in grace? You believe the Scriptures; does she not in her character and conduct show as divine as Jacob does, or as Samuel, or as David, or as Jeremias, or in a far higher measure? Has she not notes far more than sufficient for the purpose of convincing you? She takes her rise from the very coming of Christ, and receives her charter, as also her very form and mission, from His mouth. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."

Coming to you, then, from the very time of the Apostles, spreading out into all lands, triumphing over a thousand revolutions, exhibiting so awful a unity, glorying in so mysterious a vitality, so majestic, so imperturbable, so bold, so saintly, so sublime, so beautiful, O ye sons of men, can ye doubt that she is the Divine Messenger for whom you seek? Oh, long sought after, tardily found, desire of the eyes, joy of the heart, the truth after many shadows, the fulness after many foretastes, the home after many storms, come to her, poor wanderers, for she it is, and she alone, who can unfold the meaning of your being and the secret of your destiny. She alone can open to you the gate of heaven, and put you on your way. "Arise, shine, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; for, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." "Open ye the gates, that the just nation, that keepeth the truth, may enter in. The old error is passed away; Thou wilt keep peace,—peace, because we have hoped in Thee. Lord, Thou wilt give peace to us, for Thou hast wrought all our works for us. O Lord, our God, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us, but in Thee only make we mention of Thy Name. The dying, they shall not live; the giants, they shall not rise again; therefore Thou hast visited and broken them, and hast destroyed all their memory."

O my brethren, turn away from the Catholic Church, and to whom will you go? it is your only chance of peace and assurance in this turbulent, changing world. There is nothing between it and scepticism, when men exert their reason freely. Private creeds, fancy religions, may be showy and imposing to the many in their day; national religions may lie huge and lifeless, and cumber the ground for centuries, and distract the attention or confuse the judgment of the learned; but on the long run it will be found that either the Catholic Religion is verily and indeed the coming in of the unseen world into this, or that there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic, nothing real in any of our notions as to whence we come and whither we are going. Unlearn Catholicism, and you open the way to your becoming Protestant, Unitarian, Deist, Pantheist, Sceptic, in a dreadful, but inevitable succession; only not inevitable by some accident of your position, of your education, and of your cast of mind; only not inevitable, if you dismiss the subject of religion from your view, deny yourself your reason, devote your thoughts to moral duties, or dissipate them in engagements of the world. Go, then, and do your duty to your neighbor, be just, be kindly-tempered, be hospitable, set a good example, uphold religion as good for society, pursue your business, or your profession, or your pleasure, eat and drink, read the news, visit your friends, build and furnish, plant and sow, buy and sell, plead and debate, work for the world, settle your children, go home and die, but eschew religious inquiry, if you will not have faith, nor fancy that you can have faith, if you will not join the Church.

Else avoid, I say, inquiry; for it will but lead you thither, where there is no light, no peace, no hope; it will lead you to the deep pit, where the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the beauteous heavens are not, but chilliness, and barrenness, and perpetual desolation. O perverse children of men, who refuse truth when offered you, because it is not truer! O restless hearts and fastidious intellects, who seek a gospel more salutary than the Redeemer's, and a creation more perfect than the Creator's! God, forsooth, is not great enough for you; you have those high aspirations and those philosophical notions, inspired by the original Tempter, which are content with nothing that is, which determine that the Most High is too little for your worship, and His attributes too narrow for your love.

But enough;—while we thus speak of the Evil One and his victims, let us not forget to look to ourselves. God forbid that, while we preach to others, we ourselves should become castaways!

MENTAL SUFFERINGS OF OUR LORD IN HIS PASSION.

EVERY passage in the history of our Lord and Saviour is of unfathomable depth, and affords inexhaustible matter of contemplation. All that concerns Him is infinite, and what we first discern is but the surface of that which begins and ends in eternity. It would be presumptuous for any one short of Saints and Doctors to attempt to comment on His words and deeds, except in the way of meditation; but meditation and mental prayer are so much a duty in all who wish to cherish true faith and love toward Him, that it may be allowed us, my brethren, under the guidance of holy men who have gone before us, to dwell and enlarge upon what otherwise would more fitly be adored than scrutinized. And certain times of the year, this especially,* call upon us to consider, as closely and minutely as we can, even the more sacred portions of the Gospel history. I would rather be thought feeble or officious in my treatment of them, than wanting to the Season; and so I now proceed, because the religious usage of the Church requires it, and though any individual preacher may well shrink from it, to direct your thoughts to a subject, especially suitable now, and about which many of us perhaps think very little, the sufferings which our Lord endured in His innocent and sinless soul.

You know, my brethren, that our Lord and Saviour, though He was God, was also perfect man; and hence He had not only a body, but a soul likewise, such as ours, though pure from all stain of evil. He did not take a body without a soul, God forbid! for that would not have been to become man. How would He have sanctified our nature by taking a nature which was not ours? Man without a soul is on a level with the beasts of the field; but our Lord came to save a race capable of praising and obeying Him, possessed of immortality, though that immortality had lost its promised blessedness. Man was created in the image of God, and that image is in his soul; when then his Maker, by an unspeakable condescension, came in his nature, He took on Himself a soul in order to take on Him a body; He took on Him a soul as the means of His union with a body; He took on Him in the first place the soul, then the body of man, both at once, but in this order, the soul and the body; He Himself created the soul which He took on Himself, while He took His body from the flesh of the Blessed Virgin, His Mother. Thus He became perfect man with body and soul; and, as He took on Him a body of flesh and nerves, which admitted of wounds and death, and was capable of suffering, so did He take a soul too, which was susceptible of that suffering, and moreover was susceptible of the pain and sorrow which are proper to a human soul; and, as His atoning passion was undergone in the body, so it was undergone in the soul also.

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* Passion-tide.

As the solemn days proceed, we shall be especially called on, my brethren, to consider His sufferings in the body, His seizure, His forced journeyings to and fro, His blows and wounds, His scourging, the crown of thorns, the nails, the Cross. They are all summed up in the Crucifix itself, as it meets our eyes; they are represented all at once on His sacred flesh, as it hangs up before us,—and meditation is made easy by the spectacle. It is otherwise with the sufferings of His soul: they cannot be painted for us, nor can they even be duly investigated; they are beyond both sense and thought, and yet they anticipated His bodily sufferings. The agony, a pain of the soul, not of the body, was the first act of His tremendous sacrifice; "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," He said: nay; if He suffered in the body, it really was in the soul, for the body did not convey the infliction on to that, which was the true recipient and seat of the suffering.

This it is very much to the purpose to insist upon; I say, it was not the body that suffered, but the soul in the body; it was the soul, and not the body, which was the seat of the suffering of the Eternal Word. Consider, then, there is no real pain, though there may be apparent suffering, when there is no kind of inward sensibility or spirit to be the seat of it. A tree, for instance, has life, organs, growth, and decay; it may be wounded and injured; it droops, and is killed; but it does not suffer, because it has no mind or sensible principle within it. But wherever this gift of an immaterial principle is found, there pain is possible, and greater pain according to the quality of the gift. Had we no spirit of any kind, we should feel as little as a tree feels; had we no soul, we should not feel pain more acutely than a brute feels it; but, being men, we feel pain in a way in which none but those who have souls can feel it.

Living beings, I say, feel more or less according to the spirit which is in them; brutes feel far less than man, because they cannot reflect on what they feel; they have no advertence or direct consciousness of their sufferings. This it is that makes pain so trying, viz., that we cannot help thinking of it, while we suffer it. It is before us, it possesses the mind, it keeps our thoughts fixed upon it. Whatever draws the mind off the thought of it, lessens it; hence friends try to amuse us when we are in pain, for amusement is a diversion. If the pain is slight, they sometimes succeed with us; and then we are, so to say, without pain, even while we suffer. And hence it continually happens that in violent exercise or labor, men meet with blows or cuts, so considerable and so durable in their effect, as to bear witness to the suffering which must have attended their infliction, of which nevertheless they recollect nothing. And in quarrels and in battles wounds are received which, from the excitement of the moment, are brought home to the consciousness of the combatant, not by the pain at the time of receiving them, but by the loss of blood that follows.

I will show you presently, my brethren, how I mean to apply what I have said to the consideration of our Lord's sufferings; first I will make another remark. Consider, then, that hardly any one stroke of pain is intolerable; it is intolerable when it continues. You cry out perhaps that you cannot bear more; patients feel as if they could stop the surgeon's hand, simply because he continues to pain them. Their feeling is that they have borne *as much* as they can bear; as if the continuance and not the intenseness was what made it too much for them. What does this mean, but that the memory of the foregoing moments of pain acts upon and (as it were) edges the pain that succeeds? If the third or fourth or twentieth moment of pain could be taken by itself, if the succession of the moments that preceded it could be forgotten, it would be no more than the first moment, as bearable as the first, (taking away the shock which accompanies the first); but what makes it unbearable is, that it *is* the twentieth; that the first, the second, the third, on to the nineteenth moment of pain, are all concentrated in the twentieth; so that every additional moment of pain has all the force, the ever-increasing force, of all that has preceded it. Hence, I repeat, it is that brute animals would seem to feel so little pain, because, that is, they have not the power of reflection or of consciousness. They do not know they exist; they do not contemplate themselves; they do not look backwards or forwards; every moment as it succeeds, is their all; they wander over the face of the earth, and see this thing and that, and feel pleasure and pain, but still they take everything as it comes, and then let it go again, as men do in dreams. They have memory, but not the memory of an intellectual being; they put together nothing, they make nothing properly one and individual to themselves out of the particular sensations which they receive; nothing is to them a reality or has a substance beyond those sensations; they are but sensible of a number of successive impressions. And hence, as their other feelings, so their feeling of pain is but faint and dull, in spite of their outward manifestations of it. It is the intellectual comprehension of pain, as a whole diffused through successive moments, which gives it its special power and keenness, and it is the soul only, which a brute has not, which is capable of that comprehension.

Now apply this to the sufferings of our Lord;—do you recollect their offering Him wine mingled with myrrh, when He was on the point of being crucified? He would not drink of it; why? because such a potion would have stupefied His mind, and He was bent on bearing the pain in all its bitterness. You see from this, my brethren, the character of His sufferings; He would have fain escaped them, had that been His Father's will; "If it be possible," He said, "let this chalice pass from me"; but since it was not possible, He says calmly and decidedly to the Apostle, who would have rescued Him from suffering, "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" If He was to suffer, He gave Himself to suffering; He did not come to suffer as little as He could; He did not turn away His face from the suffering; He confronted it, or, as I may say, He breasted it, that every particular portion of it might make its due impression on Him. And as men are superior to brute animals, and are affected by pain more than they, by reason of the mind within them, which gives a substance to pain, such as it cannot have in the instance of brutes; so, in like manner our Lord felt pain of the body, with an advertence and a consciousness, and therefore with a keenness and intensity, and with a unity of perception, which none of us can possibly fathom or compass, because His soul was so absolutely in His own power, so simply free from the influence of distractions, so fully directed *upon* the pain, so utterly surrendered, so simply subjected to the suffering. And thus He may truly be said to have suffered the whole of His passion in every moment of it.

Recollect that our Blessed Lord was in this respect different from us, that, though He was perfect man, yet there was a power in Him greater than His soul, which ruled His soul, for He was God. The soul of other men is subjected to its own wishes, feelings, impulses, passions, perturbations; His soul was subjected simply to His Eternal and Divine Personality. Nothing happened to His soul, by chance, or on a sudden; He never was taken by surprise; nothing affected Him without His willing beforehand that it should affect Him. Never did He sorrow, or fear, or desire, or rejoice in spirit, but He first willed to be sorrowful, or afraid, or desirous, or joyful. When we suffer, it is because outward agents and the uncontrollable emotions of our minds bring suffering upon us. We are brought under the discipline of pain involuntarily, we suffer from it more or less acutely according to accidental circumstances, we find our patience more or less tried by it according to our state of mind, and we do our best to provide alleviations or remedies of it. We cannot anticipate beforehand how much of it will come upon us, or how far we shall be able to sustain it; nor can we say afterward why we have felt just what we have felt, or why we did not bear the suffering better. It was otherwise with our Lord. His Divine Person was not subject, could not be exposed, to the influence of His own human affections and feelings, except so far as He chose. I repeat, when He chose to fear, He feared; when He chose to be angry, He was angry; when he chose to grieve, He was grieved. He was not open to emotion, but He opened upon Himself voluntarily the impulse by which He was moved. Consequently, when He determined to suffer the pain of His vicarious passion, whatever He did, He did, as the Wise Man says, *instanter*, "earnestly," with His might; He did not do it by halves; He did not turn away His mind from the suffering as we do;—(how should He, who came to suffer, who could not have suffered but of His own act?)—no, He did not say and unsay, do and undo; He said and He did; He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God; sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou fitted to me." He took a body in order that He might suffer; He became man, that He might suffer as man; and when His hour was come, that hour of Satan and of darkness, the hour when sin was to pour its full malignity upon Him, it followed that He offered Himself wholly, a holocaust, a whole burnt-offering;—as the whole of His body, stretched out upon the Cross, so the whole of His soul, His whole advertence, His whole consciousness, a mind awake, a sense acute, a living co-operation, a present, absolute intention, not a virtual permission, not a heartless submission, this did He present to His tormentors. His passion was an action; He lived most energetically, while He lay languishing, fainting, and dying. Nor did He die, except by an act of the will; for He bowed His head, in command as well as in resignation, and said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit"; He gave the word, He surrendered His soul, He did not lose it.

Thus you see, my brethren, had our Lord only suffered in the body, and in it not so much as other men, still as regards the pain, He would have really suffered infinitely more, because pain is to be measured by the power of realizing it. God was the sufferer; God suffered in His human nature; the sufferings belonged to God, and were drunk up, were drained out to the bottom of the chalice, because God drank them; not tasted or sipped, not flavored, disguised by human medicaments, as man disposes of the cup of anguish. And what I have been saying will further serve to answer an objection, which I shall proceed to notice, and which perhaps exists latently in the minds of many, and leads them to overlook the part which our Lord's soul had in His gracious satisfaction for sin.

Our Lord said, when His agony was commencing, "My soul is sorrowful unto death"; now you may ask, my brethren, whether He had not certain consolations, peculiar to Himself, impossible in any other, which diminished or impeded the distress of His soul, and caused Him to feel, not more, but less than an ordinary man. For instance, He had a sense of innocence which no other sufferer could have; even His persecutors, even the false apostle who betrayed Him, the judge who sentenced Him, and the soldiers who conducted the execution, testified His innocence. "I have condemned the innocent blood," said Judas; "I am clear from the blood of this just Person," said Pilate; "Truly this was a just Man," cried the centurion. And if even they, sinners, bore witness to His sinlessness, how much more did His own soul! and we know well that even in our own case, sinners as we are, on the consciousness of innocence or of guilt mainly turns our power of enduring opposition and calumny; how much more, you will say, in the case of our Lord, did the sense of inward sanctity compensate for the suffering and annihilate the shame! Again, you may say, that He knew that His sufferings would be short, and that their issue would be joyful, whereas uncertainty of the future is the keenest element of human distress; but He could not have anxiety, for He was not in suspense, nor despondency or despair, for He never was deserted. And in confirmation you may refer to St. Paul, who expressly tells us, that "for the joy set before Him," our Lord "despised the shame." And certainly there is a marvellous calm and self-possession in all He does: consider His warning to the Apostles, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"; or His words to Judas, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" and "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" or to Peter, "All that take the sword, shall perish with the sword"; or to the man who struck Him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" or to His Mother, "Woman, behold thy Son."

All this is true and much to be insisted on; but it quite agrees with, or rather illustrates, what I have been observing. My brethren, you have only said (to use a human phrase) that He was always Himself. His mind was its own centre, and was never in the slightest degree thrown off its heavenly and most perfect balance. What He suffered, He suffered because He put Himself under suffering, and that deliberately and calmly. As He said to the leper, "I will, be thou clean"; and to the paralytic, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"; and to the centurion, "I will come and heal him"; and of Lazarus, "I go to wake him out of sleep"; so He said, "Now I will begin to suffer," and He did begin. His composure is but the proof how entirely He governed His own mind. He drew back, at the proper moment, the bolts and fastenings, and opened the gates, and the floods fell right upon His soul in all their fulness. That is what St. Mark tells us of Him; and he is said to have written his Gospel from the very mouth of St. Peter, who was one of three witnesses present at the time. "They came," he says, "to the place which is called Gethsemani; and He saith to His disciples, Sit you here while I pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and He *began to be* frightened and to be very heavy." You see how deliberately He acts; He comes to a certain spot; and then, giving the word of command, and withdrawing the support of the Godhead from His soul, distress, terror, and dejection at once rush in upon it. Thus He walks forth into a mental agony with as definite an action as if it were some bodily torture, the fire or the wheel.

This being the case, you will see at once, my brethren, that it is nothing to the purpose to say that He would be supported under His trial by the consciousness of innocence and the anticipation of triumph; for His trial consisted in the withdrawal, as of other causes of consolation, so of that very consciousness and anticipation. The same act of the will which admitted the influence upon His soul of any distress at all, admitted all distresses at once. It was not the contest between antagonist impulses and views, coming from without, but the operation of an inward resolution. As men of self-command can turn from one thought to another at their will, so, much more, did He deliberately deny Himself the comfort, and satiate Himself with the woe. In that moment His soul thought not of the future, He thought only of the present burden which was upon Him, and which He had come upon earth to sustain.

And now, my brethren, what was it He had to bear, when He thus opened upon His soul the torrent of this predestinated pain? Alas! He had to bear what is well known to us, what is familiar to us, but what to Him was woe unutterable. He had to bear, that which is so easy a thing to us, so natural, so welcome, that we cannot conceive of it as of a great endurance, but which to Him had the scent and the poison of death;—He had, my dear brethren, to bear the weight of sin; He had to bear your sins; He had to bear the sins of the whole world. Sin is an easy thing to us; we think little of it; we do not understand how the Creator can think much of it; we cannot bring our imagination to believe that it deserves retribution, and, when even in this world punishments follow upon it, we explain them away or turn our minds from them. But consider what sin is in itself; it is rebellion against God; it is a traitor's act who aims at the overthrow and death of his Sovereign; it is that, if I may use a strong expression, which, could the Divine Governor of the world cease to be, would be sufficient to bring it about. Sin is the mortal enemy of the All-holy, so that He and it cannot be together; and as the All-holy drives it from His presence into the outer darkness, so, if God could be less than God, it is sin that would have power to make Him less. And here observe, my brethren, that when once Almighty Love, by taking flesh, entered this created system, and submitted Himself to its laws, then forthwith this antagonist of good and truth, taking advantage of the opportunity flew at that flesh, which He had taken, and fixed on it, and was its death. The envy of the Pharisees, the treachery of Judas, and the madness of the people, were but the instrument or the expression of the enmity which sin felt toward Eternal Purity, as soon as, in infinite mercy toward men, He put Himself within its reach. Sin could not touch His Divine Majesty but it could assail Him in that way in which He allowed Himself to be assailed, that is, through the medium of His humanity. And in the issue, in the death of God incarnate, you are but taught, my brethren what sin is in itself, and what it was which then was falling, in its hour and in its strength, upon His human nature, when He allowed that nature to be so filled with horror and dismay at the very anticipation.

There, then, in that most awful hour, knelt the Saviour of the world, putting off the defenses of His divinity, dismissing His reluctant Angels, who in myriads were ready at His call, and opening His arms, baring His breast, sinless as He was, to the assault of His foe,—of a foe whose breath was a pestilence, and whose embrace was an agony. There He knelt, motionless and still, while the vile and horrible fiend clad His spirit in a robe steeped in all that is hateful and heinous in human crime, which clung close round His heart, and filled His conscience, and found its way into every sense and pore of His mind, and spread over Him a moral leprosy till He almost felt Himself to be that which He never could be, and which His foe would fain have made Him. Oh, the horror, when He looked and did not know Himself, and felt as a foul and loathsome sinner from His vivid perception of that mass of corruption which poured over His head and ran down even to the skirts of His garments! Oh, the distraction when He found His eyes and hands, and feet, and lips, and heart, as if the members of the Evil One, and not of God! Are these the hands of the Immaculate Lamb of God, once innocent, but now red with ten thousand barbarous deeds of blood? are these His lips, not uttering prayer, and praise, and holy blessings. but as if defiled with oaths, and blasphemies, and doctrines of devils? or His eyes, profaned as they are by all the evil visions and idolatrous fascinations for which men have abandoned their Adorable Creator? And His ears, they ring with sounds of revelry and of strife; and His heart is frozen with avarice, and cruelty and unbelief; and His very memory is laden with every sin which has been committed since the fall, in all regions of the earth, with the pride of the old giants, and the lusts of the five cities, and the obduracy of Egypt, and the ambition of Babel, and the unthankfulness and scorn of Israel. Oh, who does not know the misery of a haunting thought which comes again and again, in spite of rejection, to annoy, if it cannot seduce? or of some odious and sickening imagination, in no sense one's own, but forced upon the mind from without? or of evil knowledge, gained with or without a man's fault, but which he would give a great price to be rid of at once and forever? And adversaries such as these gather around Thee, Blessed Lord, in millions now; they come in troops more numerous than the locust or the palmer-worm, or the plagues of hail, and flies, and frogs, which were sent against Pharaoh. Of the living and of the dead and of the as yet unborn, of the lost and of the saved, of Thy people and of strangers, of sinners and of Saints, all sins are there. Thy dearest are there, Thy saints and Thy chosen are upon Thee, Thy three Apostles, Peter, James, and John; but not as comforters, but as accusers, like the friends of Job, "sprinkling dust toward heaven," and heaping curses on Thy head. All are there but one; one only is not there, one only; for she, who had no part in sin, she only could console Thee, and therefore she is not nigh. She will be near Thee on the Cross, she is separated from Thee in the garden. She has been Thy companion and Thy confidant through Thy life, she interchanged with Thee the pure thoughts and holy meditations of thirty years; but her virgin ear may not take in, nor may her immaculate heart conceive, what now is in vision before Thee. None was equal to the weight but God; sometimes before Thy Saints Thou hast brought the image of a single sin, as it appears in the light of Thy countenance, or of venial sins, not mortal; and they have told us that the sight did all but kill them, nay, would have killed them, had it not been instantly withdrawn. The Mother of God, for all her sanctity, nay, by reason of it, could not have borne even one brood of that innumerable progeny of Satan which now compasses Thee about. It is the long history of a world, and God alone can bear the load of it. Hopes blighted, vows broken, lights quenched, warnings scorned, opportunities lost; the innocent betrayed, the young hardened, the penitent relapsing, the just overcome, the aged failing; the sophistry of misbelief, the wilfulness of passion, the obduracy of pride, the tyranny of habit, the canker of remorse, the wasting fever of care, the anguish of shame, the pining of disappointment, the sickness of despair; such cruel, such pitiable spectacles, such heart-rending, revolting, detestable, maddening scenes; nay, the haggard faces, the convulsed lips, the flushed cheek, the dark brow of the willing slaves of evil, they are all before Him now; they are upon Him and in Him. They are with Him instead of that ineffable peace which has inhabited His soul since the moment of His conception. They are upon Him, they are all but His own; He cries to His Father as if He were the criminal, not the victim; His agony takes the form of guilt and compunction. He is doing penance, He is making confession, He is exercising contrition with a reality and a virtue infinitely greater than that of all Saints and penitents together; for He is the One Victim for us all, the sole Satisfaction, the real Penitent, all but the real sinner.

He rises languidly from the earth, and turns around to meet the traitor and his band, now quickly nearing the deep shade. He turns and lo! there is blood upon His garment, and in His footprints. Whence come these first-fruits of the passion of the Lamb? no soldier's scourge has touched His shoulders, nor the hangman's nails His hands and feet. My brethren, He has bled before His time; He has shed blood; yes, and it is His agonizing soul which has broken up His framework of flesh and poured it forth. His passion has begun from within. That tormented Heart. the seat of tenderness and love, began at length to labor, and to beat with vehemence beyond its nature; "the foundations of the great deep were broken up"; the red streams rushed forth so copious and fierce as to overflow the veins, and bursting through the pores, they stood in a thick dew over His whole skin; then forming into drops, they rolled down full and heavy, and drenched the ground.

"My soul is sorrowful even unto death," He said. It has been said of that dreadful pestilence which now is upon us, that it begins with death; by which is meant that it has no stage or crisis, that hope is over when it comes, and that what looks like its course is but the death agony and the process of dissolution; and thus our Atoning Sacrifice, in a much higher sense, began with this passion of woe, and only did not die, because at His Omnipotent will His Heart did not break, nor Soul separate from Body, till He had suffered on the Cross.

No· He has not yet exhausted that full chalice, from which at first His natural infirmity shrank. The seizure and the arraignment, and the buffeting, and the prison, and the trial, and the mocking, and the passing to and fro, and the scourging, and the crown of thorns, and the slow march to Calvary, and the crucifixion, these are all to come. A night and a day, hour after hour, is slowly to run out before the end comes, and the Satisfaction is completed.

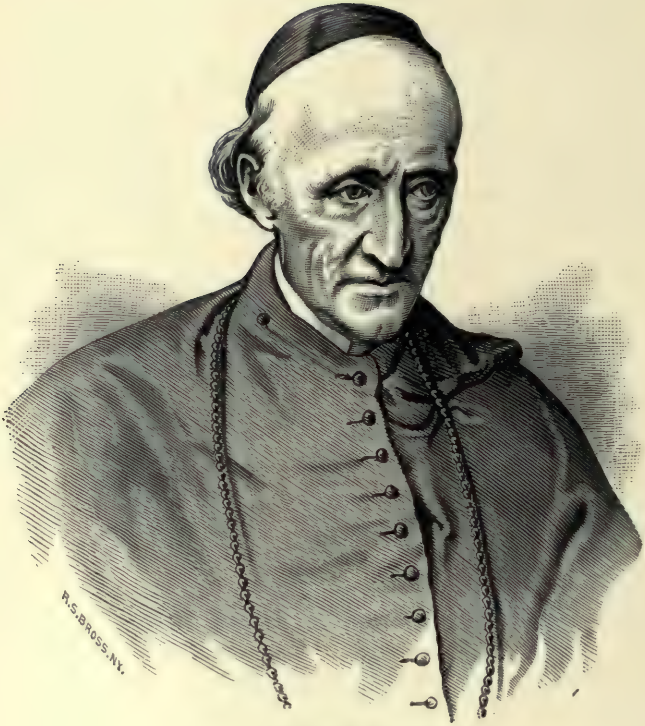
And then, when the appointed moment arrived, and He gave the word, as His passion had begun with His soul, with the soul did it end. He did not die of bodily exhaustion, or of bodily pain; at His will His tormented Heart broke, and he commended His Spirit to the Father.

. . . .

"O Heart of Jesus, all Love, I offer Thee these humble prayers for myself, and for all those who unite themselves with me in spirit to adore Thee. O holiest Heart of Jesus most lovely, I intend to renew and to offer to Thee these acts of adoration and these prayers, for myself a wretched sinner, and for all those who are associated with me in Thy adoration, through all moments while I breathe, even to the end of my life. I recommend to Thee, O my Jesus, Holy Church, Thy dear spouse, and our true Mother, all just souls and all poor sinners, the afflicted, the dying, and all mankind. Let not Thy Blood be shed for them in vain. Finally, deign to apply it in relief of the souls in Purgatory, of those in particular, who have practiced in the course of their life this holy devotion of adoring Thee."

CARDINAL MANNING.

Cardinal **Henry Edward Manning** was born in England in 1808. In the year 1851 he resigned preferment in the Anglican Church, and became a Catholic. In 1857 His Eminence was ordained priest, and in the year 1865 he was elevated to the Archbishopric of Westminster. and in 1874 founded the Roman Catholic Kensington University. In 1875 he was created Cardinal. His Eminence took active part in the Vatican Council, defending the infallibility dogma.



CARDINAL MANNING.

THE REVOLT OF THE INTELLECT AGAINST GOD.

"But yet the Son of Man, when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?"—ST. LUKE xviii. 8.

BY this question our Divine Lord intends us to understand that, when He comes, He shall find many who do not believe, many who have fallen from the faith. It foretells that there shall be apostasies; and if apostasies, therefore that He shall still find the truth; but He will find also those that have fallen from it. And this is what the Holy Ghost, speaking by the Apostle, has distinctly prophesied. St. Paul says, "Now the Spirit manifestly saith that, in the last times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils." And again, St. John says, "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now there are become many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last hour." The meaning therefore of our Lord is this: not that when He comes He will not find the Church He founded in all the plenitude of its power, and the faith He revealed in all the fulness of its doctrine. "The city seated upon the hill cannot be hid." The Holy Catholic Church is the "light of the world," and so shall be to the end. It can never be separated from its Divine Head in heaven. The Spirit of Truth, who came on the day of Pentecost, according to our Divine Lord's promise, will abide with it forever: therefore when the Son of God shall come at the end of the world, there shall be His Church as in the beginning, in the amplitude of its Divine authority, in the fulness of its Divine faith, and the immutability of its teaching. He will find then the light shining in vain in the midst of many who will be willingly blind; the teacher in the midst of multitudes, of whom many will be willingly deaf: they will have eyes, and see not; and ears, and hear not; and hearts that will not understand. As it was at His first coming, so shall it be at His second. This, then, is the plain meaning of our Lord's words.

And now, before I enter upon this subject, I wish to say a word of a superstition which, strange to say, pervades those who are willing to believe but little else. For in its incredulity the human mind is liable to fall into the greatest of all credulities; and one credulous superstition of these days is this: That faith and reason are at variance; that the human reason, by submitting itself to faith, becomes dwarfed; that faith interferes with the rights of reason; that it is a violation of its prerogatives, and a diminution of its perfection. Now I call this a pure superstition; and those who pride themselves upon being men of illumination and of high intellect, or, as we have heard lately, in the language of modern Gnosticism, "men of culture," are, after all, both credulous and superstitious.

God, who is the perfect and infinite intelligence—that is, the infinite and perfect reason—created man to His own likeness, and gave him a reasonable intelligence, like His own. As the face in the mirror answers to the face of the beholder, so the intelligence of man answers to the intelligence of God. It is His own likeness. What, then, is the revelation of faith, but the illumination of the Divine reason poured out upon the reason of man? The revelation of faith is no discovery which the reason of man has made for himself by induction, or by deduction, or by analysis, or by synthesis, or by logical process, or by experimental chemistry. The revelation of faith is a discovery of itself by the Divine Reason, the unveiling of the Divine Intelligence, and the illumination flowing from it cast upon the intelligence of man; and if so, I would ask, how can there be variance or discord? How can the illumination of the faith diminish the stature of the human reason? How can its rights be interfered with? How can its prerogatives be violated? Is not the truth the very reverse of all this? Is it not the fact that the human reason is perfected and elevated above itself by the illumination of faith?

There have been three periods of the human reason in the history of mankind. The first period was when the reason of man wandered alone, without revelation, as we see in the heathen world, and most especially in the two most cultivated races of the heathen world; I mean the Greek and the Roman. The second period was that in which the human reason, receiving the light of revelation, walked under the guidance of faith; that is to say, by the revelation of God of old to His prophets, and by His revelation through the incarnation of His Son in Christianity. Lastly, there is a period setting in—not for the whole world, not for the Church of God, but for individuals, races, and nations—of a departure from faith, in which the human reason will have to wander once more alone, without guide or certainty; not indeed as it did before, but, as I shall be compelled hereafter to show, in a worse state, in a state which is, in truth, a dwarfing and a degradation of the human intelligence.

The first state, then, in which the reason of man wandered without revelation was the state of the heathen world. They had no knowledge of God, except by an obscured tradition, which came dimly from the beginning. But the condition of the human reason under faith is an elevated and a nobler state. No man can read the Old Testament—the Book of Psalms, the Book of Proverbs, to say nothing of the prophetical books of the Old Testament—without perceiving at once that, in the most elaborate literature of Greece and Rome, there is nothing which, for intellectual elevation, refinement, and power, is comparable with them. When we come on to the period of Christianity, I may say, in one word, that the history of the progress and the perfection of the human intellect is the history of Christianity itself; and that Christianity has elevated, cultivated, developed, invigorated, and perfected the human intellect. Apart from all hopes of eternal life, and in its mere effect on this world, upon man as man, as a rational being, faith has been his elevation. Lastly, we come to that period of which it is my purpose now to speak. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says: "Be not easily moved from your mind, nor be frighted, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as sent from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand"; because, he says, that it shall not come "unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped."

Now, I am not going to enter into the question of when that day will come; that is not a part of the message committed to me. Neither am I going to enter into an exposition of unfulfilled prophecies about the man of sin. But out of this epistle I take one word and one idea. Before that day comes there shall be "a revolt." Now, a revolt means a rebellion, a rising, a casting-off of obedience, and the erection of a self-constituted authority in its place. I will try to bring before you the signs and marks of this rising or revolt of the intellect of men that were once Christians, and to show that the intelligence of Christian nations has, in these last ages, begun to manifest the phenomena and signs of a departure from faith, which, though it can in no way affect the immutability, stability, and imperishable certainty of the revelation of truth, any more than blindness can cloud the sun at noonday, nevertheless shows that there is a current carrying the minds of men away from faith in Christ and in God into the darkness of unbelief.

1. First of all, there exists at this day, and there has existed for two centuries, a certain number of men—few indeed—who profess themselves to be Atheists, or not to believe the existence of God. I am sorry to say we have among us a certain number of such men who, by their speeches and writings, profess this, which I must call not only a blasphemous, but a stupid impiety. I call it stupid for this reason. A man whom Englishmen are fond of calling the greatest philosophical intellect

that England ever produced, in one of his essays has used these words. Quoting the Book of Psalms, he says, "The fool hath *said* in his heart, There is no God." It is not said, "The fool hath *thought* in his heart": that is, the fool did say so in his heart, because he hoped there might be no God. He did not say it in his head, because he knew better. And this explanation is exactly what the Apostle has written, speaking of the ancient world: "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity: so that they" (that is, the nations who know not God) "are inexcusable"; "for, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." And he goes on to explain the reason of it; "as they liked not to have God in their knowledge": they had no love, no liking for Him; there was no moral sympathy with His perfections of purity, justice, mercy, sanctity, and truth. These things were out of harmony with their degraded nature; and because they had no love to retain this knowledge of a pure and holy God, therefore their intellects were darkened. And yet, notwithstanding all this, even these, who not knowing God, and not glorifying Him as God, worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, these were not Atheists. So far from it, they were Polytheists: they believed in a multitude of gods. So profoundly rooted in human nature was a belief in God, that when they lost the knowledge of the one only true God, they multiplied for themselves a number of false gods. The human mind was incapable of conceiving the perfection of the one only true God, and it divided the Divine idea into a multitude of gods; but it was so profusely and instinctively filled with the notion of the existence of God, that it multiplied God, instead of rejecting His existence. The heathen world, therefore, is a witness and a testimony to the existence of God. It became superstitious, credulous, anything you will, but atheistic it could not be. Nay, more than this: even the learned men, the more refined and the more cultivated, they also did not reject the notion of God; they became Pantheists, that is to say, they invested everything with divinity. The thought of God was so kindred to their nature, it had such a response in them, their intellect and their conscience testified with such constant accord to the reasonableness of believing in God, or in gods, that they invested all things round about them with a participation in the Divine nature. How, then, has it come to pass that men, in these last times, after receiving the illumination of the Faith, and knowing "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent," knowing Him in His perfections, in His attributes, and by His works and grace,—that they should have fallen lower, I must say, than even the heathen world, that they should have come to deny the very existence of God?

They are, indeed, few in number; but, nevertheless, they are active and full of zeal to propagate their opinions. In France there exists a school of Atheism which has a few disciples also in England; I mean the Positivist school of philosophy. The founder of it, Comte, taught that the human intellect has three periods: the first is the period of childhood, the second is the period of youth, and the third the period of manhood. Now it says the period of childhood is the theological period, in which the human reason believes in gods or in God. The second period of the human reason is that which the founder of this school of philosophy calls the metaphysical period; and here is a refinement well worthy of note. He says, when men are men, they give up the superstition of believing in God; nevertheless, they fall into the superstition of believing in cause and effect, in law and principle, that is, in the metaphysical conceptions which are intrinsic through the inevitable action of the human reason. He treats these as superstitions. As the belief in God was a theological superstition, so the belief in cause and effect, and consequence, and principle, and law—all this is a metaphysical superstition. Well, the third state of the human reason, which is the perfect state of manhood, in what does it consist? In believing that which we can see, feel, touch, handle, test, weigh, measure, or analyze by chemistry. We may test the facts, but we must not connect them together. We must not say that one thing follows after another by a law, or is caused by it. An explosion of fire-damp is not caused by the candle being carried into the pit; it follows after the carrying of it into the pit, but it is a metaphysical superstition to believe that it is caused by it. This is what is called the scientific state of the human mind. And this scientific state of the human mind is when, having pushed over the horizon and out of sight the idea of God, the idea of cause and effect, of law and principle, and all mental philosophy, we are reduced to this—that we may count and number and distinguish the things we see as phenomena and facts, but we must not connect them together, we must not form conceptions as to why they follow one upon another. And this is Science, the perfection of human reason! The immediate result of this, of necessity, is Atheism. I would ask, Is this the elevation of the human reason? Does this Philosophy dignify, or perfect, or exalt, or unfold it, or confer upon it knowledge greater than it had before? If there can be anything which dwarfs, and stunts, and diminishes, and distorts the human reason, it is this. Atheism, then, is a lower abasement of the intellect than was ever reached by the heathen world. More than this, it is a degradation and distortion of the human intelligence; and in proportion as the human intelligence departs from the knowledge of God, in that same degree it departs from its own perfection. Nevertheless, this school does exist among us; and this is the first form, or rather the worst form, of the revolt of the intellect; because it is the revolt of the intellect from God altogether, from His existence, and from all that He has made known to us by the light of revelation, and even from that which He has made known to us by the light of nature, which is the light of reason.

2. Secondly, there is another and a modified form of this revolt. There are men (and I am sorry to say they are more numerous than the last) who, though they do not reject the existence of God, do nevertheless reject the knowledge of God; that is, they profess to believe in a God, because they see with all mankind (except a few who are isolated and abnormal) that the light of reason, the light of nature itself, obliges a man to believe in a first cause, and that this first cause must be a personal cause, an intelligence, and a will. To doubt of this is, as I said before, to be an anomaly in the rational order of man. But, while these men believe in a God of nature, nevertheless they reject the revelation which He has given them of Himself. And how did they come to this state? Not all at once. They came by progressive stages; and I protest that, in what I am about to say, I say it in a sorrow which I cannot put in words, still more, without the least tinge of controversy; because the longer I live, and the more I see of the state of our own country, the less am I disposed to utter one word which can make wider the unhappy divisions which exist among those who still believe in Christianity as a Divine revelation. Nevertheless, I must tell the truth. The first cause of Rationalism (that is, the rejection of Christianity in the present day) was the rejection of the Divine authority of the Church of Jesus Christ three hundred years ago; and that by a law of production so legitimate, by an intellectual law so certain, that, I think, any one who would give himself sufficient time and apply sufficient industry to follow the history of unbelief in the last three hundred years would see it to demonstration. When, three hundred years back, certain nations in the north and west of Europe had rejected the authority of the Church as a Divine teacher, they immediately began to examine the human evidences upon which the doctrines of Christianity reposed. Christianity can only rest either upon a Divine authority—that is, a Divine basis of certainty—or upon a human and historical basis. Having rejected the Divine authority, or the Divine basis, they had nothing left to them but the human and historical basis; and that human and historical basis was the history of Christianity as found in the inspired books of Holy Scripture and in the works of uninspired writers. They began to apply human reason to criticise, to test, to measure the credibility, both extrinsic and intrinsic, of every article of the Faith. I say, first, the extrinsic credibility; that

is, whether it could be historically proved that this or that doctrine was believed in the beginning and has been believed ever since; secondly, the intrinsic credibility: that is to say, whether this or that doctrine was in itself reconcilable with the human reason. And applying this critical test, they rejected doctrine after doctrine. We all know how many fragmentary Christianities sprung from what was called the Reformation, differing from each other; the German form of the Reformation differing from the English, the English differing from the Scotch, and the Swiss from both. These fragmentary Christianities were so many exhibitions of the criticism of the human reason working out for itself what seemed to be credible or probable as to the original revelation of God.

It was not difficult to foresee that one man would go farther than another, that one would reject more than another; and that one man would begin early in life believing a great deal more than he believed at the end of it, and therefore that all things would be in a perpetual flux of mutation and uncertainty; so that for three hundred years the amount of Christianity that has been believed on this human and critical basis has been perpetually diminishing, and the residuum which is left upon that foundation now is incalculably less than that with which men started three hundred years ago. I hardly like to go into positive proofs of this, for fear of wounding where I desire to leave no wound; but it is only this last week when, in one of the highest places of this realm, evidence was quoted from a most unsuspicious and impartial correspondent, writing from Germany, who declared the state of religious belief in that country to be such that neither Rome nor Luther would recognize it as Christianity. And yet that was a country in which, only three hundred years ago, before the intellectual revolt against the Divine authority of Faith arose, Christianity was once perfect. Of England, I had rather not speak at all. I pray every day of my life for England. I never say the Holy Mass without praying earnestly that light may be poured out over England, and that the eyes of men may be purged of their film, to see that they are contending one with another to the destruction of their common inheritance; and that we may one day be all united again, in the unity of the only Faith as it is in Jesus. This is my prayer, and I desire most earnestly to refrain from saying a word which can cause the least estrangement in any one who hears me.

But is it not undeniable that at this moment Christianity in England is being undermined? Is it not certain that Rationalism in every form, whether speculative and cultivated, or gross and vulgar, is, in every generation that passes, expanding and establishing itself more widely among the people of England? Moreover, I am old enough to know that, forty years ago, men believed more than they believe now, that doctrines were then held as indisputable which are now openly disputed.

The rejection of the Divine authority necessarily throws men upon the only alternative—human criticism applied to Scripture, to antiquity, to Fathers, to history, to Councils, and to the acts of the Holy See. There is nothing on the face of the earth which the human reason does not claim to subject to itself, to sit in judgment upon, to test as if it were the creation of man, to decide its credibility as if man were the measure of truth, to pronounce upon whether it be Divine or not. The result of this anarchy of criticism is, that multitudes of men have rejected Christianity altogether: men, whom but a few years ago I knew firmly to believe in Christianity, are now, to my certain knowledge, Rationalists. They now believe nothing of Christianity, because, having applied the false principle of human criticism to the matter of Divine revelation, they have logically and consistently carried out the application of a false premise, to the destruction of Christianity altogether. The premise is false, its result is logical.

Let us now apply to this subject the teaching of the Syllabus. Two of the errors condemned in it are—

1st. "That the human reason, without any regard to the revelation of God, is the sole and sufficient judge of truth and of falsehood, of right and of wrong, and is a law of itself and in itself, sufficient for the welfare of individuals and of States."

2d. "That the human reason is the source of all the truths of religion."

In the beginning of the last century, there was a book written, called "Christianity as old as the Creation." I need not tell you that that book contained no Christianity. It denied all supernatural revelation, and professed to show that all truth was in the natural reason of man. If we should desire to see the fruit of these principles, we may go back to the end of the last century. See what Paris was in the year 1793; see what Paris is again in the year 1871. Tell me whether the human reason, without Christianity, is a law of itself, and the sole judge of truth and falsehood, and of right and wrong, and sufficient for the welfare of individuals and of States. It was only yesterday I read in a public dispatch from Paris, that the Commune had decreed that all religious teaching should cease in the schools. We know that the churches, which a short time ago were employed for sacred uses, are now political clubs, in which, in the course of the last ten days, death was unanimously voted to the chief pastor of that Christian city. These are the fruits of the rejection of Christianity. Such, then, is the second step in the revolt of the intellect —the revolt which begins with the rejection of the Divine authority of the Church of God, and then goes on to reject evidences, next to reject doctrines, and lastly to reject Christianity.

3. The third kind of intellectual revolt, and it is the last of which I will speak, in respect to those who are without, is a form of false philosophy, which in the Syllabus is described as "moderate" Rationalism, as compared with that of which we have been hitherto speaking, which is there called "absolute" Rationalism. Now the moderate Rationalism consists in this: in the retaining a belief of Christianity, or the professing to believe it; but the believing of it only so much as, upon private criticism and its own judgment, the individual mind is disposed to retain. But is it not obvious at once that the human reason can only stand related to the revelation of God, either as a critic, or as a disciple in the presence of a Divine Teacher? The moment the human reason begins to criticise, to test, to examine, to retain, or to reject, it has ceased to be a disciple; it has become the critic; it has ceased to be the learner, it has become the judge; and yet find me, if you can, any middle point where the reason of man can stand between the two extremes of submitting to the Divine authority of faith as a disciple, and of criticising the whole revelation of God as a judge. There is nothing between the two. Now this kind of intellectual revolt (I must call it by a hard name, but it is an old one, and used by the Apostles) is heresy. What is the meaning of heresy? It means the choosing for ourselves, as contra-distinguished from the receiving with docility from the lips of a teacher– the choosing for ourselves what we will believe and how much we will believe. St. James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all"; and that, for this reason: He that said, Thou shalt not kill, said also, Thou shalt not steal; but if I steal my neighbor's goods without taking his life, I violate the Divine authority which runs through both the commandments. In the same way, he who shall believe all the articles of faith, and yet reject one of them, in that rejection rejects the whole Divine authority upon which all the articles of faith alike depend. This spirit of criticism begins, as I said before, in the rejection of the principle of Divine authority and the adoption of private judgment, which is essentially, though at first covertly, a violation of that Divine authority. The human reason thereby unconsciously assumes to itself to be the test and the measure of that which is to be believed. For instance; in interpreting Holy Scripture, if I interpret the Book according to the light of my individual judgment, the interpretation that I attach to it is my own. The text may be Divine, but the interpretation is human. And this must be, wheresoever the Divine authority of the Church is not recognized as a principle of faith. You know how the rejection of this Divine authority has shattered the unity of faith in England. I say

this, as I said before, with sorrow. I do not charge all those who are out of the unity of the Catholic faith with heresy. The English people are indeed in heresy, but I do not call them heretics. God forbid! They were born into that state of privation. They found themselves disinherited. They have never known their rightful inheritance. They have grown up, believing what has been set before them by parents and by teachers; their state of privation has been caused by the sin of others three hundred years ago, and by no act of rejection of their own. The millions of our people, the children, the unlearned, the simple, the docile, the humble, the wives and mothers and daughters, the great multitude who live lives of prayer and of charity and of mutual kindness, who never had the opportunity of knowing the truth—to call them heretics would be to wound charity. They have never made a perverse election against the truth; and I heartily believe that millions of them, if the light of the Catholic Church were sufficiently before them, would, as multitudes have done in every age, forsake all things to take up their cross and follow their Master.

4. I must now make application of what I have said, more nearly to ourselves. What I am going to add, I address most especially to those who are of my flock.

We live in a country which for three hundred years has been pervaded by a spirit of opposition to the Catholic Church. Everything round about us is full of antagonism to the Faith. The whole literature of this country is written by those who, sometimes unconsciously, sometimes consciously, assume an attitude of hostility to it. I say, sometimes unconsciously, because, being born in that state, they often do so without being aware that they have received an heirloom of false principles and of false histories respecting the Holy Catholic Church. Without knowing it, they are perpetually incorporating them with what they write; so that the greater part of the literature of this country, which is in the hands of us all, contains a systematic contradiction of that which we believe. The newspapers, which fill the whole country, day by day are animated by a spirit which is against us; and they are filled by details, and narratives, and correspondence, and they must forgive me if I say, fables, fictions, fabrications, absurdities—anything that can pander to the morbid appetite, to the craving for scandals against Catholic institutions, Catholic priests, Catholic nuns. Only the other day we read attacks against certain nuns in Paris which, for studied but transparent falsehood, were worthy of the Commission of Henry VIII. How is it possible that Catholics can read these things day by day, and their eyes, and imaginations, and hearts receive insensibly no stain from them? They who walk in the sun cannot help being tanned. You go to and fro in the midst of all this literature and all these daily calumnies, you breathe this atmosphere charged with untruths—how is it possible that you should be unaffected by them? Do we not frequently hear Catholics say: "Am I to believe this?" "Can I contradict it?" "If it be not contradicted, there must be some truth in it." Little by little it gets into the minds of men with, "I suppose, then, it cannot be denied"; "Where there is smoke there is fire." In this way, falsehoods are insinuated. They are either never contradicted, or the contradiction is never published, or if published, hardly seen. The slander has done its work, and the stain remains. We live where Catholics are few, where those who are not Catholics are the great multitude; we are bound up with them in kindred, in affinity, in friendship, in business, in duty, in society. It is impossible that we should not live amongst them, work with them, and have friendships with them. Charity obliges us to converse with them, and we hear much that certainly does not tend to confirm the faith. There was growing up in the minds of some men a disposition, which, I am happy to say, is nearly cast out again, to diminish and to explain away, to understate and reduce to a minimum that which Catholics ought to believe and to practice. This spirit began in Germany. It says: "I believe everything which the Church has *defined*. I believe all dogmas; everything which has been defined by a General Council." This sounds a large and generous profession of faith; but they forget that whatsoever was revealed on the day of Pentecost to the Apostles, and by the Apostles preached to the nations of the world, and has descended in the full stream of universal belief and constant tradition, though it has never been defined, is still matter of Divine faith. Thus there are truths of faith which have never been defined; and they have never been defined because they have never been contradicted. They are not defined because they have not been denied. The definition of the truth is the fortification of the Church against the assaults of unbelief. Some of the greatest truths of revelation are to this day undefined. The infallibility of the Church has never been defined. The infallibility of the Head of the Church was only defined the other day. But the infallibility of the Church, for which every Catholic would lay down his life, has never been defined until now; the infallibility of the Church is at this moment where the infallibility of the Pope was this time last year: an undefined point of Christian revelation, believed by the Christian world, but not yet put in the form of a definition. When, therefore, men said they would only believe dogmas, and definitions by General Councils, they implied, without knowing it, that they would not believe in the infallibility of the Church. But the whole tradition of Christianity comes down to us on the universal testimony and the infallibility of the Church of God; which, whether defined or not, is a matter of Divine faith. I will make application of what I have said when I sum up the argument I am stating. Next, people began to say: "I can admit that the Head of the Church has a supreme authority, but that authority is not without its limits, and the limits are here and there." Now who, I ask, can limit the jurisdiction of a supreme authority? Who can prescribe the limits of any jurisdiction but one who in authority is superior to him who holds the jurisdiction? This spirit of insubordination was coming in amongst us; it has no existence now, because the Council of last year struck it dead. I should have thought that a generous heart, filled with the love of God, would have desired to know more and more of Divine truth, and would have said, "Let me know everything which God has revealed, let me have the fullest and the amplest knowledge," rather than be jealous and niggardly in limiting the growth of that knowledge.

5. Lastly, and this is the only other point I will at present touch on, the effect of such an atmosphere as that we live in, breathing all the day long the cold air of a country which for three hundred years has been opposed to the Holy Catholic Faith, is to produce that which must be called practical unbelief, even in many who would lay down their lives for the dogmas of the Faith. And that practical unbelief is this: their faith resides in their intellect whole and perfect, but it is cold and unenergetic in their life, and it does not govern and mould the character and the will. They get acclimatized to the temperature round about them. You all know how we become acclimatized to a foreign country, how we can learn the habits and the language and the accent of a foreign people. Such is the state of many who intellectually retain their faith, but practically seem not to believe. They become, for instance, unconscious of the Communion of Saints, of the presence of God, of the operation of the unseen world, of the working of the Holy Spirit of God in the Church, and of the personal agency and subtlety of the enemy of truth. I have given these last two examples, because they are the two stealthy and secret approaches whereby the enemy of truth first assails those who sincerely believe. When opening his trenches against the faith of those who never doubted, he begins with the least noise, and under cover.

I will now sum up what I have said. The revolt of the intellect against God is against His existence, or against His revelation, or against His Divine authority. And there are the two stealthy and incipient forms of intellectual revolt to which Catholics are tempted; the one of diminishing what they believe to a minimum, the other in reducing to the least that which they are bound to submit to in point of authority, or to practice in point of devotion.

I can make but one application of what has been said. Two years ago, when the Œcumenical Council was summoned to meet in Rome, immediately through all European countries, both those which are within the unity of the Church and those which are separated from it, there arose a conspiracy against the Council. Men of the character I have been describing, with those called "liberal Catholics," and, strange to say, Christians of all sects, and Israelites not a few, revolutionists, rationalists, chiefly out of the Church, but some within it, professors, declaimers, secret political societies, discontented and fractious minds already out of harmony with authority and the Church in all parts of Europe, combined against the Vatican Council. This general conspiracy strove, by correspondence, and by articles, pamphlets, and newspapers, to avert one thing, which all alike instinctively felt to be fatal to their pretensions. They all alike feared lest the infallible authority of the Head of the Church should be defined as a doctrine of faith. An unerring instinct taught them that such a definition would require of critics the submission of disciples. They were perfectly right; so perfectly right, indeed, that those who desired to see this definition made, desired it for the same explicit reason for which others opposed it. It was well known on either side that we were contending for the Divine authority of faith—the world against it, the Church for it—and that the axe was laid to the root of the tree. The conflict was not for this doctrine or that doctrine, nor for a fragment in detail, but for the Divine certainty of the whole. Well, that opposition was encouraged, flattered, countenanced by the favor of governments and diplomatists, statesmen and philosophers. All the newspaper press and the whole public opinion of the world was united against the Vatican Council. It tried to write it down, to make it ridiculous, to hold it up to contempt; men staked their literary credit and their authority over men upon the issue of the effort to turn the Vatican Council aside from its purpose, and to hinder it from doing its work. I am not surprised that no little disappointment should be in the minds of those who so conspired. I am not the least surprised at their saying and writing sharp and bitter things against us; for a more complete overthrow of a very powerful conspiracy was never seen. Well, that being over, we next heard that after publication of the definition, in every Catholic country, I know not how many bishops, how many priests, how many professors, how many learned men, how many of the Catholic laity, were to rise up to begin a new reformation. We held our peace; we knew better. The time was not come. Words do little; events do everything. We waited. What is the result? Every bishop of the Church of God acknowledges the authority of that Œcumenical Council. If there be here and there a priest who does not acknowledge its authority, they may be counted on your fingers. I do indeed hear of a professor here and there; but it is not all learned men that are professors, and it is not all professors that are learned men. Among the bishops and among the priests of the Church there are many profound theologians who have never sat in a professor's chair. It is not the habit that makes the monk, nor is it the title of professor that makes the learned man; and many that have never sat in the chair of a professor are more profoundly learned than many who have; and there are many sitting in those chairs who, to speak with profuse respect, are not learned. If, therefore, I find that in Germany some professors have been making declarations against the Council, that does not surprise, still less alarm, me. It is against this same rationalistic spirit—that is, the pretensions of perverted intellect—that the whole pontificate of Pius IX. has contended. And it was perfectly foreseen, that the moment this intellectual Gnosticism was touched, it would rise; and the rising has been incomparably less than was expected.

There never was a General Council of the Church after which there followed less of contradiction. After the great Council of Nice, Arianism became a formal heresy which afflicted the Church for centuries. After the Council of Ephesus, Nestorianism became a formal heresy which is not extinct at this day. After the Council of Constance, the spirit of national insubordination sowed the seeds of Gallicanism, which was only extinguished last year in the Vatican Council. After the Council of the Vatican, or at least its first sessions, it is no surprise that a handful of professors in Germany should rise up against it; and when I analyze the list and find out who these professors really are, I am still farther from surprise. There are, I believe, only two professors of theology; but we find professors of botany, mineralogy, chemistry, anatomy, physics, and of I know not what. The other day we saw an address from the University of Rome to an aged and celebrated professor at Munich. Well, there came an address from the University of Rome; and there went up a cry of exultation in England, that even within sight of the windows of the Vatican, Rome had protested against the Vatican Council. I have to-day read the names of the men who signed that address; and I find that they were, with hardly an exception, men intruded by the Italian Government since last September, and that they style themselves professors of botany, of mineralogy, of chemistry, of surgery, and one describes himself as professor of Veterinary Pathology.

Before the Council met, a great preacher in France, whose natural gifts had filled the land with his fame, in an evil hour lifted up the eloquent voice which God had given him, against the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Where is he now? Lost, powerless, unknown.

The venerable professor in Germany—more learned, indeed, in history sacred and profane, than either in Christian philosophy or in theology, the founder of a school and the master of many disciples—through the whole of the Council exercised his influence with a skill and a boldness which would have made itself sensibly felt against any authority which was not Divine. We looked forward with anxiety to what might be his future career. I was fully prepared to hear that which I have heard; and I feared too that his eminent example might have led astray a multitude of his disciples. What do I see? Not a bishop, though many were his disciples. A few priests, and a handful of professors; and this is all that comes after the Council of the Vatican. A little momentary agitation, a little transient noise, and a passing sorrow. The Council has extinguished the last remaining divergence of thought in respect to faith, to be found among Catholics. It has compacted and consolidated the Divine authority of the Church in its head, and therefore in the whole body, both in the active and passive infallibility. The authority of the Vatican Council is fatal to the semi-rationalism which had crept within the Church. The antagonists knew it well, and the Council knew it likewise when it made that definition. There never was a time when the faith of the Catholic Church was more firm, complete, and universal than at this time. And if in the course of ages a revolt of the intellect has carried away individuals from the Faith, in the course of the same ages, the manifestations of the Divine authority of the Church in the midst of mankind have been made more luminous and self-evident than ever.

THE REVOLT OF THE WILL AGAINST GOD.

"The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be."—ROMANS viii. 7.

ON looking back at what I have hitherto said, I feel more than ever the difficulty under which I have been, in laying before you a subject which, if it had been treated in detail, with the exactness which a philosophical or a theological argument would require, must have become entirely impossible in such a popular form. But the treating it in a popular form may perhaps lay my statement open to question and to cavil. Between these two difficulties I can only attempt to give a correct outline. I will therefore remind you briefly of what I have said.

I have spoken of the revolt of the intellect from God as one of the chief evils of these latter times; and I instanced in proof of it the rise of Atheism—a negation of the existence of God—which I then said, and say again, is characteristic of these latter days; because the earlier ages of the world were so profusely penetrated with the traditionary belief in a Divine being, that though they fell into Polytheism, Pantheism, and idolatry, yet into Atheism, as we know it now, they never fell. The other intellectual evils of these times are Deism, or the rejection of revelation; heresy, or the rejection of the Divine voice of the Church, the jealous and ungenerous limitation of the doctrinal authority of the Church, even in those who believe in the revelation of the Faith; and lastly, the practical unbelief of lukewarm and heartless Catholics. These two last being what may be called the premonitory symptoms of rationalistic doubt and of final unbelief.

The next subject before us is the revolt of the will of man from the authority of God. The connection between the two subjects is evident. We never will anything which we have not first thought. There is an action of the intellect preceding every act of the will; for the will that acts without the previous guidance of the intellect is an irrational will. It may be the action of a man, but it is not a human action, because it is not under the guidance of reason. Therefore, before every act of the will, there must be an act of the intellect or reason. The connection between the last and the present subject is this: that if the reason or intellect be rightly directed by the truth, which is the intelligence of God, the will will be directed according to the law of God. But if the intellect be perverted or obscured, then the perversion or the obscurity will descend from the intellect into the will, and the will will be likewise perverted or enfeebled. Now the words which I have taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans express this truth. He had already said, "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh," but according to the Spirit. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath delivered me from the law of sin and death; for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh; that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For they that are according to the flesh, mind the things that are of the flesh; but they that are according to the Spirit, mind the things that are of the Spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is death: but the wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. And they who are in the flesh cannot please God." Now the word "flesh" here means simply mankind, human nature, man as he is without God, man as he is, with the affections, the passions, the intellect, the will, and the three wounds which came by the fall; that is, ignorance in the intellect, disorder in the passions, and weakness in the will. This is what the Apostle calls the "flesh." Now, he says the *wisdom* of the flesh; and in the Latin version in one place it is translated "the prudence of the flesh"; in another, "the wisdom of the flesh"; and in the original Greek it is the "mind"; that is to say, the aggregate of affections, passions, and thoughts acting upon the will, disturbing and perverting it. Human nature in its fallen state is declared to be an enemy of God, not subject to the law of God. St. Paul says that it cannot be subject to the law of God, for this reason: so long as it is in that state of disorder, it must be intrinsically opposed to the will of God; for it is unholy, and God is holy; it is false, and God is true; it is unjust, and God is just; and therefore, like as a crooked line cannot be a straight line—and if the line can be straightened, its crookedness has ceased to exist, for crookedness can never be straight—so it is with human nature, unless it is changed, renewed, and elevated. In renewal it puts off its former disorder, which cannot be subject to the law of God. The disorder ceases to exist.

Now, such was not the state of man when God made him in the beginning. Man was created perfect, both in body and soul. The passions and affections were in perfect subjection to his will, and his will to the will of God. From the first moment of his creation he was constituted in a state of grace, and the Spirit of God dwelt in him, illuminating him with the knowledge of God, ordering his affections and passions according to the law of God, and subjecting his will to the will of God: so that there was a supernatural unity and harmony in his soul, and his soul was, as it were, the Kingdom of God within him. Such was the state of man in the beginning; and the wisdom of the flesh then had no existence—the wisdom of the Spirit reigned in him, which is both life and peace. When sin entered, and death by sin, then the wisdom of the flesh developed itself; that is, human nature in its fallen state, deprived by its own sin of the Spirit of God, became darkened, troubled, disordered, unholy. The unity and harmony which existed before the dominion of the soul over itself, was shattered and destroyed. The rebellion of the passions and affections against the soul at once arose. As soon as the will of man revolted against the will of God, the passions and affections in him, which till then had been subject to him, revolted. He was punished for his revolt against God by an internal revolt against himself.

Now this rebellion of the soul is healed by the redemption of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. In the regeneration of the soul by the Sacrament of holy Baptism, the Spirit of God is once more communicated to the nature of man. God makes the soul His dwelling-place; the order and harmony of the soul begins to be renewed in Him. The wisdom of the Spirit is the mind of one who, being under the guidance and government of the Spirit of God, has subjected his intellect to the truth of God, and his will to the will of God. He is therefore in friendship with Him. St. John and St. James both say that the friendship of this world is enmity against God, because there is an essential enmity between the state of fallen man and God. But when, by regeneration, the will of man is restored to union with God, friendship with God is restored to man. This, then, is the meaning of the Apostle's words. Now, let us make application of them. A rock of crystal resolves itself into a multitude of crystals, every one of which bears the type of the whole. The primitive form pervades the whole block. In like manner, every regenerate soul restored to friendship and union with God, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is compacted in the Body of Christ: "unto whom coming," as St. Peter says, "be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house.' And as every stone is shaped and squared and fashioned and fitted to the place that it is to occupy, so every Christian soul, built up into the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ, grows into a temple in which God dwells by His Spirit. In this kingdom the will of God is supreme, and the Holy Spirit perpetually dwells, pervading the Church with sanctity. The Church incorporates the will of God, and makes it visible among men. The sins of individuals notwithstanding, the Church is conformed by its interior subjection to the will of God, because it is a spiritual society made up of individuals, called from all races and languages, compacted and built together in indissoluble unity, as they subject themselves, one by one, to the wisdom of the Spirit, who dwells in the Church forever. But the Church has a twofold mission. The first part of its work—the highest and tne noblest—is the salvation of individual souls, as I have described. But it has another: the second part of the mission of the Church to the world is the sanctification of the civil society of the world, that is, of the households and families of men; then of peoples, nations, states, legislatures, kingdoms, empires, and the whole civil order of mankind.

The Church has had three periods. The first was the period of three hundred years, while it was accomplishing its spiritual mission for the conversion and salvation of individuals, under persecution. The second period began with the cessation of persecution in the conversion of the first emperor, by whom, it may be said, the civil power of the world first paid homage to the Church of God. From that date down to the sixteenth century, the civil society of the world was pervaded by the Christian law, by Christian faith, by Christian unity, by Christian worship. The laws of God became the laws of Christian nations; the laws of the Church were transcribed into the statutes of Christian people; and the civil and spiritual authorities of the world were united together in peace and harmony. There never was a period in history when the world, as such, was so conformed to the will of God as in that period, from the cessation of the last persecution until the sixteenth century. Do not misunderstand me to say that the world had the note of sanctity. No; sanctity is the note of the Church alone. But even the world then acknowledged God and His revelation, the unity of His worship, the unity of His Church, the supreme authority of faith, and of its laws. Even the world—the kingdoms and empires of the world—acknowledged these things; and that was a time when, howsoever the passions and affections of man rebelled, yet the public order of society was Christian, and the wisdom of the flesh was, at least so far as public laws could reach, in subjection to the wisdom of the Spirit. I know that the history of those times is full of outrages, horrors, violence, and the worst of crimes; nevertheless, I reaffirm what I have said, that in those ages the world was Christian and society was Christian. We have now entered into the third period of the history of the Church. From the sixteenth century downward to the present time there has been an undoing of that work which the Church, for the previous fourteen hundred years, had been accomplishing; there has been a pulling down of the whole fabric; a disintegration of the Christian society; an erasing of Christian laws from the statute-books of nations; a breaking-up of the unity of faith, worship, and communion; a rejection of the spiritual authority of the Church over men.

I would ask, what is it that has been going on for the last three hundred years? A revolt of the will of man from the will of God, as expressed and embodied in the whole work of the Church for the previous fourteen hundred years. When, three hundred years ago, individuals one by one revolted from the authority of the Church, they laid the first seeds of the revolutions which, in these later ages, have separated whole nations from the unity of the Faith. Individuals began the work in the sphere of private judgment, or of their private conscience before God. But that which begins in the private conscience of men one by one, becomes little by little the collective and public opinion of a people, and is at last forced upon governments and legislatures, and changes the public laws in conformity to itself. Now, for the last three hundred years, there has been a continual expunging of the law of Christianity, of the faith and the doctrines of Christianity, from the laws of Christian peoples; so that I may say that at this moment there does not remain one single people that has not separated itself formally from its old relations of unity with the Christian Church. Many, as in the north and west of Europe, have formally separated themselves altogether from the unity of the Catholic Church. Other nations, that remain at least united in faith and in outward worship, nevertheless have broken all bonds and relations with it, except in the bare retaining of dogma and of spiritual discipline. And now this revolt against the will of God, as expressed and embodied by His providence in the work of the fourteen centuries preceding, has received its momentary completion. The people most favored among Christian nations, as having in the midst of them the throne of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, have revolted, and with a sacrilegious and violent invasion have usurped the city of Rome, which, from the beginning of Christianity, has been the centre and the head of the Christian Church, and, ever since persecution ceased, has been the visible throne from which the Vicars of Christ have reigned, by faith and the Divine law, over the nations of the world.

1. The first mark, then, of these times is lawlessness. This revolt of the will from God is signally manifested in the rejection of that order of Christian civilization which the Divine providence has built up in the whole past history of Christendom. St. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy, says: "In the last days, shall come on dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, incontinent, traitors, stubborn, puffed-up

and lovers of pleasures more than of God." "Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, erring," and driving the world into error. Now these words are a prophecy of the latter times of the world; and if these be not the latter times, they have at least the marks already upon them. St. Paul also, writing to the Thessalonians, and speaking again of the latter times, says that "the man of sin," "that wicked one, shall be revealed." Now, I shall not enter into the question of who that wicked one may be; but we can distinctly understand why St. Paul calls him that wicked one. The word in the original is, "that lawless" one, that is, one who will not recognize any law but his own will, who will pull down and destroy the work of God. Now, if there be any one thing which is a more powerful solvent of the Christian world than another, it is lawlessness, the rejection of law, the rebellion of the human will, the human will making a law to itself, that is, each individual becoming his own legislator, and each legislator making laws at variance with the wills of others, causing perpetual change, universal discord, isolation of man from man, and because isolation, therefore conflict endless and suicidal.

Now, we hear, day by day, the glorification of revolutions. And what are revolutions? They are the violent disintegration of that order which is based upon authority and obedience; or, in other words, they are the extinction of the idea of law and of obligation, the overthrow of the supremacy of law, of the duties of the human conscience and of the human will to law: first to the law of God, for that is the sole foundation and basis of all authority, and then to the civil and political laws of society, which spring from that Divine law and are sanctioned by it. The first and broadest mark that is upon these days, then, is lawlessness.

I should be anticipating what I have to say hereafter if I were to take for example any particular people, or any particular nation; but I think no man that has read, be it ever so little, of the modern books upon what is called "democracy," of its gradual and steady advance, its perpetual and irresistible development, in countries separated indeed from us by a wide sea, but closely allied to us by all that acts and reacts upon peoples of the same origin, will misunderstand my meaning. This lawlessness shows itself in these three ways:

First, in individuals; that is to say, men have ceased to govern their conduct with reference to the laws of God and His Church. Many have so completely ceased to do this, that any one who does so is marked as fanatical or bigoted or a believer. We have come to the days when in some countries the man who professes faith is marked for reproach as a clerical, or soft-headed, or a reactionist. Even in our own country this is true. You may not meet it, perhaps, in the society in which you live; a certain refinement represses it. But there are classes more outspoken, where the truth is told more baldly. Fifty years ago, if a man did not believe in Christianity he held his peace, not only out of respect for others, but out of respect for himself. Now, men have no shame to profess infidelity. Then, the masses professed to be what their fathers were. Now, when, out of some hundreds of workingmen, one was known to go to church, his companions gave him a nickname, and that name was the most sacred Name that was ever heard on earth. The laws of that Divine Person cannot be vivid in the minds of those who could so disclaim their share in Him.

There is, further, a deliberate and legal departure from the Divine law which lies at the very foundation of social life. Christian matrimony is a Sacrament, and creates an indissoluble bond which death alone can loose. Such was the law of England, not only till three hundred years ago, but until fifteen years ago, though by Acts of Parliament it was violated; that is, by privileges, or private laws for private cases, persons were protected from the penalties of the law. The law of Christendom was the law of England down to fifteen years ago, and the bond of marriage was indissoluble. But the indissoluble bond of marriage is the foundation of the domestic life of Christendom. It was out of that principle of authority and order that Christendom arose in its unity and purity, in the midst of the unimaginable evils of the heathen world. And in these days a blow has been struck at this first principle of Christian homes, which are the foundation of political society.

Moreover, in the whole civil and political order there has risen up in the last century a formal rebellion against authority. About eighty years ago was published to the world a new gospel for the political order of men. It has been called "the Principles of '89." Read it for yourselves, and you will find it full of what is called "the rights of man." But there are two things of which you will find nothing. First, you will find nothing there about the rights of God; and surely they ought to have precedence; and, secondly, you will find nothing there about the duties of man; but surely men have duties. When men rise for their rights, forgetting to say a word about their duties, they are already in rebellion. I cannot fail to notice, in order to make this point clear, that we now are hearing of the rights of women; and if there can be a sign of a society inverted, and of the moral order of the world reversed, it is the putting of woman out of her proper sphere—the domestic life—where she is sovereign, and the putting her in that sphere where she ought never to set her foot—the public life of nations. To put man and woman upon an equality is not to elevate woman, but to degrade her. I trust that the womanhood of England—to say nothing of the Christian conscience which yet remains—will resist, by a stern moral refusal, the immodesty which would thrust women from their private life of dignity and supremacy into the public conflicts of men. This, again, is a part of the lawlessness of these days, and shows a decline of the finer instincts of womanhood, and a loss of that decisive Christian conscience which can distinguish not only between what is right and wrong, but between what is dignified and what is undignified both for women and for men. This clamor about women's rights may be taken as one of the most subtle and most certain marks of a lawlessness of mind which is now invading society. This, then, is the first example I will give of lawlessness in general.

2. And, secondly, this lawlessness is invading the domestic and private life of men in the form of luxury; and perhaps there is no country which is in greater danger from this cause than ours. We are the wealthiest people in the world. The personal and the national wealth of England is something incomparable in the history of mankind. I must, however, bear witness—and it is full of consolation to know it—that there is still to be found a common good sense, a firm resisting manliness, in the English character—and it prevails also in the characters of some of the women of England—a determination not to be softened and pampered. Men refuse to be made effeminate, and women to be self-indulgent. There is, then, something to resist it; and I hope, for that reason, that the pestilence of luxury may not prevail over us. But we are in danger lest our superabundant wealth should create a material civilization, so advanced, so refined, and carried out with such extraordinary subtlety of invention, that it will need a very strong and firm will not to be softened by it. There is no doubt that, in dress, in pleasures, and in amusements, there is an invasion of luxury in our higher society which is very dangerous, and for this reason: when people have allowed themselves to go up to the brink of all that is lawful, it is very easy to trespass, and to go over the line that is forbidden. The line between what is lawful and unlawful in such minds is very faint and shadowy; and those who are always walking on the brink of the precipice, will not be long before they go over. The Apostle, speaking of women, says: "She that liveth in pleasures, is dead while she is living." The taint of mortality is upon a refined and luxurious life, though on the outside, like the whited sepulchre, it seem unspotted. There is no doubt that the precept of the Apostle is very necessary in our day and in our country. He says: "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." I know I have the liberty; I may do a multitude of things with perfect safety of conscience; but I know this—that it might be an example for others, which would be dangerous

to them, and it might also be a danger to myself. At all events, it is more generous, it is more in conformity with the example set me by my Divine Lord and Master, to deny myself in many things that are lawful. Apply this to dress, to pleasures, to amusements, to the expenditure you make on yourself, to your domestic and private life, and you will find a wide field for its application.

3. Once more. The lawlessness of our times is to be found in our profuse worldliness. What is the world but the aggregate of that wisdom of the flesh, which is declared to be an enemy of God? The world always was and always will be at variance with the sanctity, the purity, the justice of God; and therefore St. John says: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world." And the world is upon us all who live in it: its sun shines upon us, we breathe its atmosphere, we are in contact with it, we eat its food, we converse with it all the day long, and happy are we if we are not tainted by it. Now for the forms in which the world presents itself to us. First, in its ambitions. You perhaps will think that ambition belongs only to public life. There is ambition everywhere, ambition in domestic life; in some form or other, ambition in every one. The desire to strain upward and to strain onward, to possess more, to be more, to rise, to get into another place, on another level, on another elevation, to outstrip neighbors, to be more than they—what is this but ambition? We recognize it and call it by its name, when it is in great and noble examples, and we are ashamed of it when it has manifested itself in the pettiness of our own private life; but it is ambition still. And this ambition of the world corrupts the hearts of multitudes, because, where this ambition is, a multitude of passions spring up round about it—envies, jealousies, rivalries, contentions, bickerings, rash judgments, detraction of neighbors, depreciations, running down those who are competing with us and perhaps outstripping us. All this is the lawlessness of the heart. Its passions are not subject to the law of God, neither, unless it be changed, can be. These must be cast out as so many unclean spirits, before the heart can be subject to the law of God. Another form of worldliness cleaves to the material interests of men; such as rivalries in business, in trade, in commerce, in the haste to get rich, in the ravenous buying and selling and bargaining, in the market, on the stock exchange, in the bank, in the counting-house; overreaching of neighbors, gambling speculations, enterprises of doubtful integrity, in which the conscience is strained and honor sacrificed; hardness to those who labor, undue profits made out of the flesh and blood of those who

are scantily paid for toil, and then, it may be, fraudulent actions with public ruin, and all coming from what cause? From the love of money—from that of which the Holy Ghost thus speaks: "The desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting after have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows." Such is the end of lawlessness—the passions, not under the government of holy fear and of justice, tempted all day long by the spirit of gain, in the hope of laying up and of being rich in this world; forgetting the warning: "They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition." Now, is there any country in the world—except, it may be, a country which has sprung from our own lineage—in which what I have been describing is to be found more dominant and more ruinous than in our own?

And there is still another form of worldliness, which also is a form of lawlessness; that is, the concealing of the law of God and the taking of the laws of the world instead; or, in other words, the fear and worship of the world. The flattery, the adulation, the sycophancy, with which people will wait upon the world to catch its favor, to be admitted into society, to sit at the tables of rich men, to be known as the acquaintance of those who bear titled names, the mean fawning obsequiousness of those who wait upon the world—where this is in a man's heart, he is not the disciple of Jesus Christ. Our Lord Himself has warned us: "How can you believe, who receive glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone, you do not seek?" The worship of the world, and the bondage of the world, the fear of losing its favor, or the fear of incurring its ridicule, degrades millions of men who were created to the image of God, and as men, if not as Christians, ought to be ashamed of such meanness. Surely, if the law of God were in them, as a living and constraining principle governing their conscience, it would elevate them above the world and all its works.

4. One more example of this subtle worldliness may be found where it is least suspected. It has invaded not only society, it has also invaded religion; it has entered into the sanctuary. In the beginning, Christians worshipped God in catacombs at the peril of their lives; they offered the Holy Sacrifice in vaults of the earth, in damp dark caverns with altars of rough-hewn stone, and with lamps which hardly gave light; in hardness, and in austerity, and in poverty. There was the spirit of martyrdom in those days. Afterward, when the peace of the Church began, the world turned to shine upon it, and the Church then worshipped God in basilicas in the noonday sun. Once, as the Fathers said, its vessels were wood and its priests were gold. Now, its vessels at least were of gold. Heresies and

schisms sprung up in the midst of splendor; men fled into the deserts, and set up once more altars of stone and crucifixes of wood, that they might worship God in the severity and sanctity of spirit and of truth. External splendor of worship is good, but internal truth and reality in the worship of God is better. It is right, indeed, and according both to the Divine law and to the pattern of God's own appointment, that the noblest and the best gifts of human skill and of human wealth should be consecrated to His honor. The Christian Church, as soon as it was able to follow the example of the saints of the Old Law, offered its costliest and best to the worship of God. The murmuring and declaiming that we hear about the simplicity of worship has in it the spirit of him who cast up for how much the ointment might have been sold; not that he cared for the poor. This carping against the Catholic Church for the splendor of its worship covers a disposition to carp against the truth. No, the Church of God by its history bears witness that the service of God in spirit and in truth requires no external splendor. It accepts, indeed, all that the art of man can do in architecture, in painting, in sculpture, in music, because all these come from God and ought to be consecrated to God. The warning of the Lord by the prophet rings in the ears of Christians: "Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house lie desolate?" It is true of us also that the wealth spent upon the private dwellings of men exceeds ten thousand-fold that which is spent upon the honor and worship of God. The Church, therefore, both consecrates all things to God's service, and also sustains the same spirit of austere interior worship as in the beginning; and the Church has in all ages, by its chief Orders, kept up its testimony that the worship of God, in spirit and in truth, does not need external splendor. St. Francis laid down as the law for his children —the most numerous family in the Catholic Church—that upon the altar there should be candlesticks of wood, and that the vestments of the priest should have no silk. You will not misunderstand me, then, when I say that the spirit of the world will often enter into the splendor of the sanctuary, and that the sounds which fill the ear, and the beauty which fills the eye, may take away the heart and the mind. Unless there be the spirit of prayer and union with our Divine Lord in the heart, men may come and go without worshipping God in spirit and in truth. This is one of our most subtle dangers. Satan knows well how to pass off the intellectual simulation of religious opinion for Divine faith; how to pass off imaginative dreamings about the perfections of saints for practical obedience; how to fill men's imaginations with ideas of asceticism while their lives are self-indulgent; and to make even the splendors, sweetness, beauty, and majesty of Catholic worship a fascination of the sense and a distraction of the soul. The tempter is always busy, and nowhere changes himself into an angel of light so easily as in church. Now, I ask, have you been enough on your guard against this? The Catholic Church, lavish as it is in all splendors, because all things are due to Him who is the Giver of all, has sure and deep correctives to recall its children from the mere fascinations of sense by the eye, or the ear, or the imagination, to the presence of God. Where Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament, no splendor can easily withdraw the mind from Him; or if any become lukewarm, there is a prompt and strong remedy in the confessional. They who live in spirit and in truth will adore in spirit and in truth, as well in the majesty of a basilica as in the austerity of a catacomb. The interior spirit vivifies all exterior forms. Ceremonies are a mere mask to the unbelieving and the undevout. They are the folds of the Divine Presence, the countenance of the unseen Majesty, to those that believe and love.

5. The last and the only other point on which I will speak is one which threatens us all, and that is, compromise. The days in which we live are not days of firmness. People who still retain a belief in revelation nevertheless hear so much against dogma, that they are often tempted to use the same language, and to disclaim dogmatism. They hear so much said against asceticism, that they try to show their freedom from it by a liberty which is dangerous. But religion without dogma is not Christianity, and religion without asceticism is not the religion by which we can be saved. The religion of Jesus Christ began in the preaching of John: "Do penance; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." There can be no repentance without the mortification of the senses. The times in which we live are perhaps, of all times since the beginning of the Church, the least ascetic. The luxury, the worldliness, the superabundance of all that is grand and beautiful even in the external worship of the Church, may help to lead men away. The fault indeed is theirs. They can turn anything into temptation; everything will be a snare if they will not correct it by a spirit of obedience to the law of God. Now, there are many marks of this shallow mind among us. First, there is little mortification of the intellect: the intellect ranges without check and without limit; men read every book that comes to hand, every newspaper they find on the table. They do not ask whether it is for the Faith, or against the Faith; is it heretical, or is it sound; is it pure, or is it impure. They begin without discrimination; they read on without fear; they find the book to be heretical, erroneous, scandalous, licentious, and yet they do not burn it; they do not even put it down. The Catholic Church strictly and wisely prohibits the reading of any books that are written by those who have fallen from the Faith, or teach a false doctrine, or impugn the Faith, or defend errors. And that for this plain

and sound reason: the Church knows very well that it is not one in a thousand who is able to unravel the subtlety of infidel objections. How many of you have gone through for yourselves the evidence upon which the authenticity, genuineness, and inspiration of the Book of Daniel rests? Have you verified the canon of the Old and New Testament? or have you mastered the philosophical refutation of Atheism? Would you advise your children to read sceptical criticisms of Holy Scripture, or the arguments of Deists? If not, why read them yourselves? You know perfectly well that the human mind is capable of creating many difficulties of which it is incapable of finding a solution. The most crude and ignorant mind is capable of taking in what can be said against truth. Destruction is easy; construction needs time, industry, and care. To gather evidence, or to ascertain the traditions of the Church, needs learning and labor, of which only they are capable whose life is given to it.

This indiscriminate and fearless reading is intellectual license; but if the intellect be not mortified, where will be the mortification of the will? Look at society, as it is called. What signs are there of mortification of the will amongst us? When do men willingly forego anything which is for their interest or their pleasure? When do they leave anything undone simply for conscience, or do anything contrary to their interest for the sake of Jesus Christ? I am afraid that it is the individual and the unit that does these things. But is this religion without the Cross the religion of Jesus Christ? Let us put it to the test. Take the Holy Scriptures in your hands, read them as they stand, do not explain them away: they are the word of God. Do not say it only means this, or it only means that. It means what it says—what God has written—and nothing else. Now hear what is written: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Again, our Lord has said: "Woe to you that are rich; for you have received your consolation." Again, He said: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many they are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it." And once more, when a man asked Him: Are they few that are saved? He said: "Strive to enter in by the narrow gate; for many, I say to you, shall seek to enter, and shall not be able. But when the master of the house shall be gone in, and shall shut to the door, you shall begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us: and he answering shall say to you, I know you not, whence you are." Once more, He says: "Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

These are the warnings of our Lord and Saviour. Take the crucifix in your hand, and ask yourselves whether this is the religion of the soft, easy, worldly, luxurious days in which we live; whether the crucifix does not teach you a lesson of mortification, of self-denial, of crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, as the Apostle says; or as our Divine Lord Himself has said: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is better to enter into life having one eye and one hand, than having two eyes and two hands to be cast into hell-fire." These are the words of God, of Jesus, our merciful, loving, compassionate Lord. They are not the words of severe and heartless men. They are the words of Divine pity, warning us that "the wisdom of the flesh is death," because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy against God, and cannot be subject to the law of God.

Let us, then, be on our guard against these things which, in their subtlety and strength, have power over us all. If we had one foot in heaven, and were to leave off mortifying ourselves, we should fall from grace.

THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST.

> "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—ST. JOHN xv. 18, 19.

MASK it as we may, there is an irreconcilable enmity between God and the world. The Christian world may put on the vestments and bear the name of Christianity, but it is the world after all. Not that there is enmity on God's part against the world; for "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." But "the friendship of this world is an enemy against God," as we have already seen, because it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be.

This, then, is the meaning of our Lord's words when He said to the Apostles, who were becoming daily conscious of the hatred of men against them: "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you." If you had been of the world—servants, friends, flatterers of the world—the world would have loved its own, it would have recognized its own reflection, its own mind, its own livery; but because you are not of the world, but I, by grace and special election, have chosen you out of the world, therefore, for that very reason, because you have my mark, because you bear my name, because, in some degree, you share my likeness; therefore the world hateth you. This enmity is perpetual: it exists at this day, it will exist to the end. Between God and the world there may be an apparent truce; there never can be peace. God is immutable; His perfections cannot change. The world is malicious, and from its malice it will not change; and therefore, as the Apostle says, 'What participation hath justice with injustice? what concord hath Christ with Belial?' God, then, when manifest in the flesh, in the person of the eternal Son, was the object of the world's chief hatred; and the world, after wreaking upon Him all that scorn, derision, insults could effect, nailed Him upon the cross. The shame and the passion of the Incarnate Son of God has been the inheritance of His Church. For what is the Church of Christ but the body of Christ? Or, in other words, it is Christ mystical, the mystical person made up, as St. Augustine says, of the divine Head in heaven and of the body spread throughout the world; "one man, one collective person." The enmity and the hatred which the world bore to Him has descended from generation to generation, as the heirloom of His body. This, then, is Christ. Now what is Antichrist?

In the beginning I disclaimed all intention of entering into the exposition of unfulfilled prophecies. I am speaking of patent facts under our eyes. They are sufficient, because they give us principles and warnings to govern our conduct. Nevertheless, I must say, in passing, that if there be anything evident in the plain words of Holy Scripture, if there be anything explicitly declared by the Christian Fathers, and anything distinctly taught by the theologians of the Church, it is this: that Antichrist, though taken to express a diffused spirit which pervades systems and incorporates itself in various forms in all ages, nevertheless will be, toward the latter days, impersonated in one who shall be the head and the chief of that Antichristian spirit and system, and shall use all his power against the Name and the Church of Jesus Christ. This I now set aside, as being beyond my purpose. I am speaking of the Antichristian spirit which manifests itself either in individuals or in whole systems, sometimes in whole nations. Just as the electricity which is suspended in the air is breathed unconsciously, so the Antichristian spirit exists in what is called the Christian world in its present fragmentary and divided state. And this is the subject with which I must conclude that which I have endeavored, but very imperfectly, to say.

I have already drawn out before you the distinction between the world as it was before it had faith in Christ, and as it became when the Christian Faith was received by the nations which were federated in what we call Christendom; and lastly, as it is now, since the world, having once been Christian, has for the last three hundred years been ceasing to be so.

Now, the Apostle has given us three marks of this final and Antichristian apostasy from the Faith. The first mark is given by St. John, where he says that "they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us"; that is to say, separation or schism, actual and visible departure from the unity of the Church. The second mark is a denial of the Incarnation of the Son of God. St. John says in his second epistle: "Many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a seducer and an antichrist." The third mark is given by St. Jude: "These are they who separate themselves, sensual men," which word signifies, in the original, men of natural intellect and natural reason; it does not necessarily mean sensual in the grosser sense, though it leads to it. "These are they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit," that is, they reject the Holy Ghost, and the work of the Spirit of God in the world. This third mark is the rejection of the revelation of the day of Pentecost, with all those truths, laws, and authorities, which took their rise from the coming of the Spirit of Truth. These then are the three marks of the world departing from Christianity.

If you look back over the last three hundred years, you will see that whole nations have departed from the visible unity of the Church. They have come to deny that any visible unity was ever instituted; they deny their separation by denying the law. "Where there is no law, there is no transgression," the Apostle says; and it is necessary to deny the law of unity in order to justify the separation. Springing up from those bodies separated from the unity of the Church has come, first, Socinianism or Unitarianism, as it is commonly called—rejection of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Godhead of the Incarnate Son, of the work of the Holy Spirit of God, first in His Divine authority, perpetually and infallibly guiding and speaking through the Church; next, in His operation through the Holy Sacraments; and thirdly, His workings of grace in the individual soul. How extensively, both in speculation and in practice, these truths are at this time rejected by many who retain the name of Christians, you well know. And once more, if you look at nations in which these departures from truth are to be found, you will find that the whole course of legislation for the last three hundred years has been, as I have already pointed out, a perpetual departure from the laws of Christianity. Forasmuch, then, as men are interminably and irreconcilably divided, it is impossible that the legislature can touch upon matters of Christianity or of religion without conflicting with the private convictions or the private opinions of some men or some bodies of men; and therefore the civil powers of the world in despair have taken refuge in the policy of eliminating and excluding altogether from the public laws of the land all reference to anything but those fundamental moral axioms which are to be found not only in Christianity, but, almost without exception, in the order of nature.

There is to be found in such individuals as I have been describing, in such nations and in such governments, a worldly character, which partakes of the Antichristian spirit. These may seem to be harsh and severe terms, but "he that is not with me, is against me." They are the words of Jesus Christ Himself. There is no neutrality in matters of faith; and the tendency of all peoples, nations, and governments that have ceased to legislate positively in a Christian sense, is to legislate at last in a sense that is, first beside, then contrary to, Christianity.

What I have now to do is to draw out the particular points in which the Antichristian spirit is to be found working in society, and therefore round about us.

1. The first illustration I will give is this: the impatience of all revealed authority, as entering in any degree into the control of the thoughts or the will of men, or into the action of government. There is a disposition in public opinion, and in public men, and in the masses, to say: "Politics have nothing to do with religion." This I have answered before; and I am going on to show one more application of this false maxim. It is commonly said, that what is called "dogma" is a limitation of the liberty of the human reason; that it is degrading to a rational being to allow his intellect to be limited by dogmatic Christianity; that liberty of thought, liberty of discovery, the progress of advancing truth, apply equally to Christianity, if it be true, as to all other kinds of truth; and therefore a man, when he allows his intellect to be subjected by dogma, has allowed himself to be brought into an intellectual bondage. Well, now, let me test the accuracy and the value of this supposed axiom. The science of astronomy has been a traditional science for I know not how many generations of men. It has been perpetually advancing, expanding, testing, completing its discoveries, and demonstrating the truth of its theories and its inductions. Now, every single astronomical truth imposes a limit upon the intellect of man. When once the truth has been demonstrated there is no further question about it. The intellect of man is thenceforward limited in respect of that truth. He cannot any longer contradict it without losing his dignity as a man of science—I might say, as a rational creature. It appears, therefore, that the certainty of every scientific truth imposes a certain limitation upon the intellect; and yet scientific men tell us that, in proportion as science is expanded by new discoveries and new demonstrations, the field of knowledge is increased. Well, then, I ask, in the name of common justice and of common sense, why may I not apply this to revelation? If the possession of a scientific truth, with its complete scientific accuracy, be not a limitation, and is therefore no degradation of the human intellect, but an elevation and an expansion of its range, why should the defined and precise doctrines of revelation be a bondage against which the intellect of man ought to rebel? On the contrary, I affirm that every revealed doctrine is a limitation imposed upon the field of error. The regions in which men may err become narrower, because the boundaries of truth are pushed farther, and the field of truth is enlarged. The liberty of the human intellect is therefore greater, because it is in possession of a greater inheritance of certainty. And yet, if there be one superstition which at the present day is undermining more than any other the faith of men, it is the no-

tion that belief in the positive dogma of Christianity is a slavish limitation of the intellectual freedom of man.

Once more, it is said that the revealed morality of Christianity is a limitation of the freedom of the human will. I must ask your forbearance for speaking of such a topic to you; for I ought to suppose that there is no one here so darkened, I must say, in heart as well as in understanding as to think that Christian morality, by limiting the actions and even the thoughts, and regulating the freedom of the will, imposes upon them a bondage unworthy of men. Nevertheless, there are some who cry out against the laws of morality which are taught by the Church of Jesus Christ, as being an interference with human liberty. Now, what does the morality of the Christian law forbid? First, all things that are unjust. Surely, no man will plead for a liberty to act unjustly. Secondly, all things that are hurtful to himself or to his neighbor. A man will not plead for liberty to do hurt to his neighbor. Will he plead for liberty to do hurt to himself? to commit suicide, for instance—that is, for the liberty of self-murder? Lastly, it forbids the commission of those things that are mortal before God, of acts that are deadly in their consequences. In the name of reason I would ask you, is there any limit imposed upon the liberty of men in taking from them the freedom to drink poison, and laying upon them the bondage of living on food? And yet the laws of the Church impose no other limitation on any man. Nevertheless, the spirit of insubordinate intellect and insubordinate will, fostered by schism and by unbelief, is spreading fast at this day; and men are crying out against the authority of revelation as a yoke and a bondage.

And it is further said, that revelation has nothing to do with the civil authority of the world. I hope that I have already given reason enough for affirming that the civil authority of the world, if it be not founded upon revelation, is, nevertheless, so guided, confirmed, and strengthened by it, that it cannot long subsist without it. If it lose the support and guidance of revelation, it soon falls into the natural order, with all the penalties of dissolution. Now, what limit does revelation impose upon the civil power? It limits authority, in those that bear it, to the execution of justice and mercy; it forbids tyranny and despotism. It limits the freedom of subjects by the law of conscience, to obedience and submission; and it teaches man to observe the equal rights of other men and the duties which he owes to his fellows. It teaches to all men the sacred law which lies at the base of all just legislation: "Do to others as you would have men do to you." These are the primary laws of justice and of charity. I ask whether these are limitations hostile to the freedom or to the prosperity of States? In one word, the only conservative spirit, a phrase we hear even to weariness—that which alone upholds, confirms, and renders indissoluble the civil society of mankind—is Christianity, or the revelation and the laws of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, if there be anything which the public opinion of most countries, separated from the unity of the Church—and, I am sorry to say, the public opinion of some countries which profess still to be within that unity—resents, it is the entrance of the laws of revelation into the sphere of their legislature. I shall not say too much by adding, that there exists a widespread animosity against the one only Church which will not accept of royal or legislative supremacy. There is in the world one Church which has never accepted of royal supremacy in faith or morals. It has never accepted Acts of Parliament or legislative enactments as superior to its own canonical legislation and to its own spiritual executive. Now, I believe, that is the only Church against which public animosity and even private hostility is levelled in any marked degree. All other bodies are treated as national, domestic, and innocuous. They are not to be feared. If they have a will of their own, they have no power to exert it. But the Church which absolutely refuses the supremacy of all civil powers is looked upon at once as aggression, invasion, and a menace to the supreme authority of public opinion, and, it may be, of princes.

2. Why is this? In one word, because the enmity which assails revelation falls upon it chiefly as incorporated in the Church. It exists there as in a definite, visible, palpable form. In the sphere of intellect men cannot lay their hands on revelation. It is, like the light of day, impalpable. In the order and the sphere of ideas it is intangible altogether; but, embodied in the Church, it becomes a visible and palpable impersonation, standing in the place of its Divine Head, on whom men laid their hands while He was within arm's length. But now, at the right hand of God, He is beyond their reach. His body, however, is here; and therefore He cried out to Saul on the way to Damascus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—that is to say, His Church upon earth is Himself. The same spirit, therefore, which was directed against Him while He was within the reach of men is now directed against His Church, which is still palpable and within their grasp. It incorporates dogma, it enforces discipline, it wields authority, it legislates, it decrees, it inflicts censures, it sits in judgment upon the conduct of men, of private persons, of professors, of nations, of princes. Come what may, it will not be silent. Let men threaten as they will, it still speaks as the Prince of the Apostles, who said: "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye."

This Divine liberty of speech, which began in the lips of the Son of God Himself, passed to His Apostles, and from them has passed to His Church. It has spoken freely throughout all ages, and throughout all the world. The prerogatives of the Church are especially offensive to the world. Our Lord said to the chief of the Apostles, and through him to them all, and through them to their successors to the end of the world: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." We do not explain away these words. We teach them as we received them from our Divine Master. They mean that what the authority of His Church binds on earth, is by Him ratified in heaven; that there is a twofold and concurrent action, which in effect is identical, between the authority of the Church on earth, and the authority of its Divine Head in heaven. And therefore, when the Apostle said, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha," he pronounced a judicial sentence which had its effect, though it was not yet seen to follow, as when our Divine Master said to the barren fig-tree, "May no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever," and the fig-tree withered away; and as when Peter rebuked Ananias and Sapphira, his sentence was straightway executed. We may not see, indeed, these palpable and immediate results; but we know with Divine certainty that the effects of excommunication will surely follow. In the Epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle, writing of the incestuous man, said: "I, indeed absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him who hath so done: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together with my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." These are not empty threats; they are judicial pronouncements of a Divine authority. Will any one tell me that this power has ceased in the world? Read the history of sacrilege against the Holy See; or read, if you will, the history of sacrilege written by a well-known writer of the Church of England two hundred years ago, who believed this Christian law, and verified it in the history of those who, three hundred years back, committed or partook of sacrilege in England. Search through history, and find me an example of sacrilege which has not sooner or later met its doom. There is a God who judgeth the earth; and He judges it through those laws which He incorporated in the authority of His Church. He executes His judgments by His own Divine providence, when and how He wills. Now against that which I have said, there is a spirit of hostility and contempt, at least assumed. I say assumed contempt; because, under the appearance of derision, there is a sharpness in the tone which shows the animosity of fear.

3. There is yet another kind of Antichristian enmity, which finds its

way into the hearts of many who would be startled and wounded if they were told that their spirit is Antichristian. If there be a subject against which public writers, public speakers, and public talkers are perpetually declaiming, it is what is called the religious life—the life of monks and of nuns. The whole literature of countries that are not Catholic is full of all manner of tales, calumnies, slanders, fables, fictions, absurdities, on the subject of monks and nuns. Now, why should men trouble themselves so much about it? Why cannot they leave peaceful people to use their own liberty? No man or woman is compelled to be monk or nun; and if by perversion of light, if by idiocy, as the world calls it, any should be found who desire to live the life of monk or nun, why should public opinion trouble itself so much about the matter? Men may become Mormons; they may settle down at Salt Lake; they may join any sect; they may adopt any practices which do not bring them under the hands of the police, and the public opinion of this country does not trouble itself about them. What, then, is the reason why it troubles itself about the religious life? Because it is a life of perfection; because it is a life which is a rebuke to the world, a direct and diametrical contradiction of the axioms and maxims by which the world governs itself. The world is therefore conscious of the rebuke, and uneasy under that consciousness. When the Son of God came into the world, all men turned against Him except the few whom He called to be His disciples. Even a heathen philosopher has recorded this belief: that if a perfectly just man were ever to be seen on earth, he would be out of place and a wonder; or, as we may say, a monster amongst men. And why? Because, in the universal injustice of mankind, he would stand alone, and his life would be a rebuke. In Holy Scripture this is described, as it were, with a pencil of light. In the Book of Wisdom, the men of this world say: "Let us lie in wait for the just; because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary to our doings, and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life; . . . . he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and he preferreth the latter end of the just; . . . . he calleth himself the Son of God; . . . . he is grievous unto us even to behold." The finger of the Holy Spirit has here traced the real analysis of this animosity against the religious life. Some years ago I remember reading a paper upon "The Extinct Virtues," and what were they? Obedience, chastity, voluntary poverty. If so, then, the eight beatitudes are extinct. I do not suppose the world would accept this. They would count me a severe and an unjust accuser if I were to say that disorder, unchastity, and the love of riches are the ascendent virtues of modern society. But if obedience, chastity, and voluntary poverty are extinct their opposites must be in the ascendent. Of this I am sure: that the prevalent spirit amongst men at this day is to feel a secret hostility against a life which surpasses their own; and therefore it is that we hear these tales, fables, slanders, fictions about monks and nuns; and that we have books like "La Religieuse" and "Le Maudit"; or romances about the acts of ex-Benedictine nuns at Naples, and suchlike; or that which is the gospel of a multitude of people—though it has been exposed a hundred times over as a stupid self-refuting imposture, condemned and exposed by positive local proof and distinct documentary evidence—the history of "Maria Monk." Nevertheless, this abomination is printed and reprinted, and bought and sold, because there is a gross morbid taste to which it panders, and a diseased hatred which it gratifies. It is not only against the life of perfection, but against every reflection of God, wheresoever it may be seen, that this Antichristian animosity directs itself. And there are two things which, perhaps, are more hated, more intensely and more bitterly attacked, than any others.

The first is the confessional, because in it the priest sits in the name of God, hearing all things in His stead, with his lips closed, and ready to shed his blood rather than break that seal. He holds a power which was given him in the Apostles on that night when our Divine Lord breathed upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." He sits there invested with that authority, a witness to the day of judgment; and the self-accusation of men is the prelude and the preparation for the last day. The world, if it could, would pull the Last Judge off His throne; but, because He is beyond the reach of its arm, they pull the priest out of the confessional.

The other thing against which the enmity of men is directed, is the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The Sacrament of the Altar is the manifestation of the Divine presence; it is the incorporation of the Divine love, sanctity, and power; and against these things the Antichristian revolt hurls itself as the chief object of its hatred: as but the other day, if our tidings speak the truth, the Blessed Sacrament was sacrilegiously mocked and scattered in the midst of blaspheming men and weeping women.

4. There is yet another object of this animosity. What I said last leads on immediately to the priesthood. Englishmen have heard from childhood so much about priestcraft, and about being priest-ridden, and about bad priests, that they grow up with a belief that a priest is a noxious creature, a sort of *fera natura*, something specially venomous, antisocial, perilous to the commonwealth of men. What is the priesthood? The priesthood is a body of men, instituted by our Saviour, into which any man of you, if he has the will and the fitness, may freely enter to-morrow.

It is not a caste; it is not Freemasonry; it is not a secret society of moral assassins, nor a close corporation of tyrannous men. It is open to all; it has no secrets but the sins of those that repent. It is the most democratic of all the governments on earth: the sons of peasants and of ploughmen are at this day standing at our altars and sitting upon the throne of Apostles. The Holy Council of Trent lays upon the conscience of bishops, in founding their seminaries, to replenish them rather with the children of the poorer classes. The priesthood, therefore, is so open to every man, that if there be a secret craft, a priestcraft, to be learnt, let him come and learn it; he has only to blame himself if he does not know all about us. We have no mysteries, or ciphers, or masonic signs. The priesthood and the theology which makes the priest are open to everybody; it is not like secret societies, which hide themselves from the light and labor underground. The priesthood is in noonday, standing at the altar, and everybody may know what it is; and yet we hear of "sacerdotalism" as if it were the Black Death or a plague of Egypt, or a pestilence which walks in darkness. In the public newspapers men are warned, and hopes are expressed that the world at last may be saved from "sacerdotalism." In the fourth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, we read these words: "He led captivity captive, He gave gifts to men," "and He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors (or teachers), for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Here is the priesthood: a body of men chosen first by our Lord, illuminated, trained, and conformed to Himself, to be the guardians and the transmitters of the truths which He revealed to them, and of the laws which He gave into their custody. They were charged afterward to deliver the same to others whom they should select, whom they, in turn, should illuminate and train to the same likeness, thereby transmitting to the end of the world, undiminished, the custody of Divine truth which was delivered to their charge. This, then, is the priesthood; and there is no doubt that it must be an object of special animosity; and for the very reason with which I began: "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you." This was said to the first priests. "If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." They are witnesses of the truth, and they have power to deliver it; and they have power to deliver it because they have a Divine certainty of the truth they deliver; and they have a Divine certainty of that truth, because they are the disciples of the Church which is divinely guided, before they become the teachers of the faithful. To them is committed the power of applying that truth to men—that is, of guiding their thoughts and consciences, and of distinguishing truth from falsehood in matters of faith, of judging the actions of men, of distinguishing between right and wrong in questions of the Divine law, and of pronouncing upon them censure, if need be; giving or withholding absolution by their sentence before God. I do not wonder, therefore, that there should be an animosity in those that do not love the Master, from whose side the priesthood springs; and I do not wonder that a bad priest—if he can be found—is the hero and the saint of the world. And it never happens that an unhappy priest, either by loss of faith or by loss of fidelity, falls from his sacred state, but he is straightway glorified as a theologian, preacher, doctor, and I know not what besides. The world receives him as its own, and because he is its own, loves him.

5. Lastly, there is one person upon whom this Antichristian spirit concentrates itself, as the lightning on the conductor. There is one person upon earth who is the pinnacle of the temple, which is always the first to be struck. It is the Vicar of Jesus Christ; and that for the most obvious of reasons. There is no man on earth so near to Jesus Christ as His own Vicar. Two hundred and fifty-seven links, and we arrive at the Person of the Son of God. Two hundred and fifty-seven Pontiffs, and we are in the presence of the Master whom His Vicar represents. That chain runs through the ages of Christian history, and connects us with the day when, on the coasts of Decapolis, Jesus said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." No man therefore brings us so near to the Person of the Son of God as His Vicar upon earth, and no man is to be made so like to Him in suffering for His sake. The first nine-and-twenty Pontiffs were crowned with martyrdom. Five-and-forty times, since then, the Pontiffs have either been driven out of Rome by violence, or by violence have been hindered from setting their foot in it. Their lives have been lives of wandering, like those the Apostle describes in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Of whom the world was not worthy; wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." Their whole life has been a life of the Cross, and that because they bear the office, and stand in the place, of their Divine Master. The Evangelists write of Jesus, and those that were with Him; as in the Book of Acts it is Peter, and those that were with him. He had taken his Master's place. And to Peter were given the two great prerogatives which constituted the plenitude of his Master's office. To him first, and to him alone, before all the others, though in the presence of the others, was given the power of the keys. To him, and to him alone, and in the presence of the others, was given also the charge of the universal flock:

"Feed my sheep." To him, and to him alone, exclusively, were spoken the words, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat" (that is, all the Apostles); "but I have prayed for thee"—in the singular number: for thee, Peter—"that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren"; and therefore the plenitude of jurisdiction, and the plenitude of truth, with the promise of Divine assistance to preserve him in that truth, was given to Peter, and in Peter to his successors.

Compare together Rome and Constantinople. Rome, at all times assailed by a warfare so manifold that the world has hurled upon it every weapon that man could forge or direct; Constantinople, under imperial protection, fostered and endowed, sank into schism, and is in bondage to the false prophet. Rome suffering, but free; free and royal; royal and reigning over the Christian world. Make another contrast. Poor Ireland, with its unbroken tradition of immaculate Catholic Faith. Poor Ireland—what preserved it three hundred years ago, and during three hundred years of suffering for the Faith? Fidelity to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, fidelity to Rome, fidelity to the changeless See of Peter. The arch of the Faith is kept fast by that keystone, which the world would fain strike out if it could, but never has prevailed to do so; and Ireland has been sustained by it: and to this day among the nations of the Christian world there is not to be found a people so instinct with faith and so governed by Christian morality as the people of Ireland. Driven abroad into all the nations of the world, into the colonies of the British Empire, into the great northern continent of America—wheresoever they go they carry with them their faith, and sow it broadcast in works of a magnitude and generosity which we here, in the midst of all our wealth, cannot attempt to imitate. Compare with poor Ireland imperial and prosperous England. The picture would be too sad; and, as I have said before, I refrain from all that could needlessly wound any that are not of my flock. You know the past divisions and estrangements, the animosities which, I hope, are now slackened, the contentions which, I trust, are now at an end. But what a history has been the religious history of England for the last three hundred years! What is its religious state now? What will be its future? The majestic cathedrals of England, the noble abbeys, the churches of ten thousand parishes, the lofty structures of our ancient towns, the sweeter, if humbler, churches in our green hamlets, and in our woodlands, and on our solitary downs, show that Faith had penetrated everywhere through the English people, and that the people were profoundly Christian. I have been reading lately the books of piety written here in England some two hundred years before what men call the Reformation, in which, if the tracing of the Spirit of God in the human heart, transcribing itself upon the page, can anywhere be found, it is in the revelations of Divine love and the interior consciousness of the soul which are left to us by our ancestors. Are Englishmen never any more to return to the unity of the Faith? Are we never again to worship at one altar? Are Englishmen to be united in everything but faith, and in faith to be forever divided? God forbid! I rejoice to know that the English people believe profoundly in God; that, as yet, the plague of Atheism has not made its havoc amongst them. They believe, too, in Christianity as a Divine revelation, and therefore they believe in Jesus Christ their Saviour; and "no man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost," and "every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." They believe, too, that Holy Scripture is the written word of God. It is true, there are to be found here and there rationalists and critics and sceptics and shallow heads, who may have rejected the written word of God: but these are not the English people. They hold it fast as their birthright. I rejoice to know it. Ay, more than this; they have declared themselves in these last years, and will all the more inflexibly declare themselves, to be Christians, being sharply warned and taught by what is now before our eyes. They will demand that their children too shall be brought up as Christians. I rejoice to know all this. May God strengthen those things that remain! May He preserve them where they exist, and revive them where they are declining! May He once more unite what is divided, in the charity of truth!

Let us now sum up what has been said of the four great evils of the day. First, we have seen that one great evil of this day is the revolt of the intellect from God. I pointed out to you how that revolt manifested itself in Atheism, in Deism, in heresy, in the diminishing and explaining away of Christian doctrine, and in practical unbelief. Secondly, I showed you the revolt of the will from the law of God. I traced it out in the lawlessness which is characteristic of these later days, in the world-worship which is a moral apostasy from God, in the luxury which is eating out the heart of morals, in the sensuous piety which paralyzes and taints even the devout, and in the softness and self-indulgence which makes us unworthy of the Cross. Thirdly, I endeavored to sketch out the revolt of society from the authority of God. I pointed out that civil society is a Divine creation in the order of nature; that God elevated and consecrated the order of nature and of politics by instituting His Church in the world, and by uniting the authority of civil government with the Christian authority of the Church. I traced out also the rebellion, the divorce, the separation, which has taken place between these two divine creations—the State, as it is called, and the Church—and as a consequence, the desecration of the civil power, the stripping of the civil society of the world of its Christian character, and the reducing it once more to the mere state of nature. In those ages when society was Christian, the public opinion, public laws, public axioms, the influence all around, sustained the individual, raised him upward, and supported him in his higher life. Now it is society that drags the individual down; Christianity lingers in individuals, but it has departed from society. And, lastly, I have endeavored to draw out what the Antichristian spirit is. It is the spirit of the world, which has separated itself altogether from the Church and from Christianity, or retains only a fragmentary Christianity, and is sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, penetrated by the Antichristian enmity. I have marked also the special objects against which this spirit directs itself: Revelation, the Catholic and Roman Church, the life of perfection, the priesthood, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

The general conclusion from all that I have said is this: there is no hope for man or for society but in returning to God. There is no other hope. There is nothing but God on which the soul can rest, on which society can stand. The most perfect legislation, the most refined human laws, the most acute human philosophy, political economy, benevolence, and beneficence in all its forms, all the social sciences of which we hear so much—all these are powerless without God. The most finished timepiece, in which every minute articulation is complete and perfect, cannot strike one note or measure one moment unless a living hand communicate to it the fund of motion which it afterward exhausts. The mightiest machine which will lift a hammer of surpassing weight, break bars of iron, or cut them as if they were the branches of the fir-tree, the most wonderful structures of mechanical skill, are nothing until the momentum is given, and that momentum must be sought elsewhere. Mechanics can do nothing without dynamical powers; and these dynamical powers, for men and for society, are to be found in God alone. They can be found only in Him to whose image man is made; they can be found nowhere but in His truth, which is the key of the human intellect, and in His grace, which is the only hand that can touch the heart in man; and if this be so, they can be found only in Christianity. Neither adults nor children can be touched by the laws of States, except externally. The State may control the external actions of men—it can imprison, it can fine, it can inflict capital punishment; but it cannot convert the sinner, nor change the will, nor illuminate the intellect, nor guide the conscience, nor shape a character. It cannot educate a child. All this is internal, not external; it is not mechanism; it belongs to the living powers of the soul; and God alone, by truth and grace, can accomplish this work in man.

I implore you, in God's name, and all the more because of the events full of sorrow and of shame to Christian men, which have crowded so thick upon us of late that, with all your heart and will, and all the weight of your soul, you cast yourselves on God. He alone can save. Use all your influence with those around you, in your homes, your households, your friendships; and if you have public influence, public trust, public authority, strive that all who bear responsibility shall cast themselves on God, as the only hope for society and for the people. Do you want to see what man without God can do? Read the history of the last eighty years in Paris. You have there one simple phenomenon—generation rising after generation without God in the world. And why? Because without Christian education. First, an atheistical revolution; next, an empire penetrated through and through with a mocking philosophy and a reckless indifferentism; afterward came Governments, changed in name and in form, but not in practice nor in spirit. The Church, trammelled by protection, its spiritual action faint and paralyzed, could not penetrate the masses of the people, nor form the rising youth. It labored fervently; its sons fought nobly for Christian freedom; thousands were saved; but for eighty years the mass of men has grown up without God and without Christ in the world. My whole soul pities them. These outbursts of horror, strife, outrage, sacrilege, bloodshed, are the harvest reaped from the rank soil in which such seed was cast. All this is true. But how did souls created to the image of God grow up in such a state? They were robbed: robbed before they were born, robbed of their inheritance, and reared up in an education without Christianity. Let this be a warning to ourselves. We are on the turn of the tide. A few active, busy, confident, and eloquent men were a year ago carrying us away with theories of State education without religion. We were told that a child might be taught to read and to write and to spell and to sum without Christianity. Who denies it? But what does this make of them? To what would they grow up? The formation of the will and heart and character, the formation of a man, is education, and not the reading and the writing and the spelling and the summing. For fifteen hundred years, Christians served God and loved man, before as yet they received this cultivation; and we, because we have it profusely, we are forgetting the deeper and diviner lessons. The tradition of Christian education in England is as yet unbroken. It is threatened now for the first time. In God's name, stand fast, and save it. I can add no more. Do not be afraid, if you find yourselves in the minority. "Woe to you when men shall bless you!" You must be censured if you are the disciples of Jesus Christ. The world that hated Him will not love you. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" And therefore, if you have the mark of the world's hatred upon you, accept it; press it to your bosom. It is the token that you are the disciples of the true and only Master. If you have the world's favor and sunshine, look to yourselves. There is a dark future before the world. What it may be, God alone knows. The Church will have to suffer; but there is a light upon it, and that light can never fade. We are in evil times, marked deeply by the four great evils of which I have spoken. Around us are "evil men and seducers, who grow worse and worse, erring, and driving into error." "Many shall come in my name," our Lord has said, "and seduce many"; and because of their iniquity the love and the charity of the many shall wax cold. Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be wars and pestilences in many places. But the end is not yet. This is only the beginning of troubles. Keep close to the footsteps of the Master who spoke those words; and, when these signs are in the sky and upon the earth, remember that He also said, "When these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption is at hand."

CARDINAL GIBBONS.

Cardinal James Gibbons, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore, was born in Maryland, in the year 1834. In 1868 he was consecrated Bishop, and created Cardinal in 1886.

Cardinal Gibbons.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

THERE is but one Being that is absolutely immortal, One alone that is everlasting, that has no beginning, that will have no end—and that Being is God. "In the beginning, O Lord," says the Psalmist, "Thou foundedst the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest, and all of them shall grow old like a garment: and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail." "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Go back in spirit to the twilight of time. Contemplate the early dawn of creation before this earth assumed its present form, when all was chaos. Even then God was in the fulness of life, "and the Spirit of God moved over the waters."

Look forward through the vista of ages to come, when the heavens and the earth shall have passed away, even then God will live. He will survive this universal wreck of matter.

Let us now look at man. What a strange contrast is presented by his physical and spiritual natures! What a mysterious compound of corruption and incorruption, of ignominy and glory, of weakness and strength, of matter and mind! He has a body that must be nourished twice or thrice a day, else it will grow faint and languid. It is subject to infirmities and sickness and disease, and it must finally yield to the inevitable law of death.

What is each one of us, but a vapor that rises and melts away, a shadow that suddenly vanishes! A hundred years ago, we had no existence; a hundred years hence, we shall probably be forgotten.

Let us now contemplate man's spiritual nature. In a mortal body, he carries an immortal soul. In this perishable mass, resides an imperishable spirit. Within this frail, tottering temple, shines a light that will always burn, that will never be extinguished. As to the past, we are finite; as to the future, we are infinite in duration. As to the past, we are creatures of yesterday; as to the future, we are everlasting. When this house of clay will have crumbled to dust, when this earth shall have passed away, when the sun and stars shall grow dim with years, even then our soul will live and think, remember and love; for God breathed into us a living spirit, and that spirit, like Himself, is clothed with immortality.

The soul is the principle by which we live and move and have our being. It is that which forms and perpetuates our identity; for it makes us to be the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The soul has intellectual conceptions and operations of reason and judgment independent of material organs. Our own experience clearly teaches us this important point. Our mind grasps what the senses cannot reach. We think of God and of His attributes, we have thoughts of justice and of truth, we perceive mentally the connection existing between premises and conclusions, we know the difference between-good and evil. Such a principle being independent of matter in its operations, must needs be independent of matter also in its being. It is, therefore, of its nature, subject to no corruption resulting from matter. Its life, which is its being, is not extinguished and cannot be extinguished with that of the body.

It is well known that there is a constant waste going on in every part of the human body which has to be renovated by daily nutriment. So steady is this exhaustion that in the judgment of medical science an entire transformation of the physical system occurs every six or eight years. New flesh and bones and tissues are substituted for those you had before. The hand with which you write, the brain which you exercise in thinking, are composed of entirely different materials. And yet you comprehend to-day what you learned ten years ago, you remember and love those with whom you were then associated. How is this? You no longer use the identical organic substance you then possessed. Does it not prove that the faculty, called the soul, by which you think, remember, and love is distinct from organic matter, that while the body is constantly changing, the soul remains the same, that it does not share in the process of decomposition and renewal through which the human frame is passing and therefore that it is a spiritual substance?

All nations, moreover, both ancient and modern, whether professing the true or a false religion, have believed in the immortality of the soul, how much soever they may have differed as to the nature of future rewards and punishments, or the mode of future existence.

Such was the faith of the people of ancient Greece and Rome, as we learn from the writings of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid, who picture the blessed in the next world as dwelling in the Elysian fields, and consign the wicked to Tartarus and Hades.

This belief in a future life was not confined to the uncultivated masses; it was taught by the most eminent writers and philosophers of those polished nations. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and other sages of Pagan antiquity, guided only by the light of reason, proclaimed their belief in the soul's immortality. "Nor do I agree," says Cicero, "with those that have *lately* begun to advance this opinion, that the soul dies together with the body, and that all things are annihilated by death. The authority of the ancients has more weight with me: either that of our own ancestors who paid such sacred honors to the dead, which surely they would not have done, if they thought those honors in no way affected them; or that of those who once lived in this country and enlightened by their institutions and instructions Magna Græcia (which now, indeed, is destroyed, but then was flourishing); or of him who was pronounced by the oracle of Apollo to be the wisest of men, who did not express first one opinion and then another, as in most questions, but always maintained the same, namely, that the souls of men are divine, and that when they have departed from the body, a return to heaven is opened to them, most speedy in proportion as each has been most virtuous and just."

These eloquent words convey the sentiments not only of Cicero himself, but also of great sages of Greece and Rome.

"This belief which we hold" (in the immortality of the soul), says Plutarch, "is so old that we cannot trace its author or its origin, and it dates back to the most remote antiquity."

The same views were held by the ancient Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and Persians, indeed by all the nations of Asia whose history has come down to us, and by the Germans, Gauls, Britons, and other ancient tribes of Europe. If we question the Indian of North or South America on this point, he will tell us of the happy hunting-grounds reserved in after-life for the brave.

We may find nations without cities, without the arts and sciences, without mechanical inventions, or any of the refinements of civilized life; but a nation without some presentiment of the existence of a future state, we shall search for in vain.

Even idolatry itself involved an implied recognition of the immortality of the soul; for how could men pay divine honors to departed heroes, whom they worshipped as gods, if they believed that death is the end of man's existence?

We may, indeed, find a man here and there who pretends to deny the existence of a future state. But like the fool that says in his heart, "There is no God," this man's "wish is father to his thought"; for if there is in the life to come a place of retribution, he feels that it will be so much the worse for him. Or even should we encounter one who really has no faith in a future life, we should have no more right to take him as a type of our intellectual and moral nature than to take the Siamese twins as types of our physical organization. The exception always proves the rule.

Now, whence comes this universal belief in man's immortality? Not from prejudice arising from education; for we shall find this conviction prevailing among rude people who have no education whatever, among hostile tribes, and among nations at the opposite poles of the earth and who have never had intercourse with one another.

We must, therefore, conclude that a sentiment so general and deep-rooted must have been planted in the human breast by Almighty God, just as He has implanted in us an instinctive love for truth and justice, and an inveterate abhorrence of falsehood and injustice.

Not only has mankind a firm belief in the immortality of the soul, but there is inborn in every human breast a desire for perfect felicity. This desire is so strong in man that it is the mainspring of all his actions, the engine that keeps in motion the machinery of society. Even when he commits acts that lead him to misery, he does so under the mistaken notion, that he is consulting his own happiness.

Now God would never have planted in the human heart this craving after perfect felicity, unless He had intended that the desire should be fully gratified; for He never designed that man should be the sport of vain and barren hopes. He never creates any thing in vain; but He would have created something to no purpose if He had given us the thirst for perfect bliss without imparting to us the means of assuaging it. As He has given us bodily eyes to view and enjoy the objects of nature around us, so has He given us an interior perspective of immortal bliss, that we may yearn for it now and enjoy it hereafter.

It is clear that this desire for perfect happiness never is and never can be fully realized in the present life.

Let us take up one by one the various sources of human enjoyment. Can earthly goods adequately satisfy the cravings of the human heart and fill up the measure of its desires? Experience proves the contrary. One might have the wealth of Crœsus of old, or of Vanderbilt in our own times, and yet his happiness would be far from complete; for he would still be oppressed by the desire for greater riches, or haunted by the fear of losing what he has acquired, or of being torn from it by death. "O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that has peace in his possessions."

Can honors fully gratify the aspirations of the soul? No. For though the highest dignities were lavished upon a man, still, like Aman, the minister of King Assuerus, he would be discontented so long as there was in the Republic one that refused to bend the knee to him. And if he sat upon the most exalted throne on earth and were ruler of kingdoms, he would, like Alexander the Great, sigh for other empires that he might conquer them. Honors bring corresponding cares. The more brilliant and precious the crown, the more heavily it presses on the brow that wears it.

I have seen and contemplated two of the greatest rulers on the face of the earth,—the civil ruler of sixty-five millions and the spiritual ruler of two hundred and fifty millions of people. I have conversed with the President and the Pope in their private apartments; and I am convinced that their exalted position, far from satisfying the aspirations of their soul, did but fill them with a profound sense of their grave responsibility.

Can earthly pleasures make one so happy as to leave nothing to be desired? Assuredly not. They that indulge in sensual gratifications are forced to acknowledge that the deeper they plunge into them the more they are enslaved and the less they are satiated by them. The keen edge of delight soon becomes blunted.

No one is better qualified than Solomon to express from experience an opinion on the power of the pleasures of sense to promote human happiness. Every creature ministered to his personal gratification, he yielded to every excess, he denied himself nothing that his heart desired; and, as the fruit of all this, he declared that he was weary of life, and that all was vanity and vexation of spirit.

We find great comfort in this life in the society of loving friends and relatives. But how frail is the thread that binds friends and kindred together! The bond *may* be broken by treachery; it *must* be broken by death. This thought haunts like a spectre, and casts its dark shadow over the social and family circle.

Another source of exquisite delight is found in the pursuit of knowledge. And this pleasure is more pure, more solid, and more lasting than sensual gratifications, because it is rational. Pythagoras was so ravished by the solution of a mathematical problem that he offered to the gods a holocaust in thanksgiving. So deeply was Archimedes absorbed in working out another problem, that he forgot to eat and drink; and when he had made the wished-for discovery, he ran through the streets of Syracuse, crying out: "Eureka! Eureka! I have found it! I have found it!" But the acquisition of knowledge, though attended with great labor, far from satisfying our desires, only sharpens our appetite for more information, and makes us more conscious of our ignorance. The higher we ascend the mount of knowledge, the broader becomes our view of the vast fields of science that still remain uncultivated by us.

Sir Isaac Newton when dying uttered these remarkable words: "I know not what the world will think of my labors; but, as for myself, I feel like a little child amusing itself on the sea-shore, finding here a smooth pebble, and there a brilliant shell, while the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me." Oh, if Newton was himself made so happy and contributed so much to the delight of others by his discoveries, what must be the bliss of those that, for all eternity, will explore without toil the boundless ocean of Divine Truth!

But the greatest consolation attainable in this life is found in the pursuit and practice of virtue. And if there is any tranquillity of mind, any delight of soul, any joy of spirit, any pure consolation of heart, any interior sunshine, it is shared by those that are zealous in the fulfilment of God's law, that have preserved their innocence from youth, or have regained it by sincere repentance. But this consolation arises from the well-founded hope of future bliss rather than from the actual fulfilment of our desires. The virtuous are happy because they have "a promise to pay," and not because they have received the actual payment of the debt of Divine Justice. They rejoice because, though in exile during this short night of time, they hope to dwell in their true country during the great eternity of to-morrow. They rejoice because they are heirs apparent of God's kingdom. Take from them this hope, and the sunshine in their heart will soon be changed to gloom. "If in this life only we be hoping in Christ, we are more miserable than all men." Why was St. Paul so cheerful in his dungeon in Rome on the eve of his execution? Because, as he tells us, "a crown of justice is laid up for me, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me on that day."

Thus we see that neither riches, nor honors, nor pleasures, nor knowledge, nor the endearments of social and family ties, nor the pursuit of virtue, can fully satisfy our aspirations after happiness. Combine all these pleasures as far as they are susceptible of combination. Let each of their sources be augmented a thousand-fold. Let all these intensified gratifications be concentrated on one man, let him have the undoubted assurance of enjoying them for a thousand years, yet will he be forced to exclaim: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity!" The more delicious the cup, the more bitter the thought that death will dash it to pieces.

Now, if God has given us a desire for perfect felicity, which He intends to be one day fully gratified; and if this felicity, as we have seen, cannot be found in the present life, it must be reserved for the time to come. And as no intelligent being can be contented with any happiness that is finite in duration, we must conclude that it will be eternal, and that, consequently, the soul is immortal. Life that is not to be crowned with immortality, is not worth living. "If a life of happiness," says Cicero, "is destined to end, it cannot be called a happy life. . . . . Take away eternity, and Jupiter is not better off than Epicurus."

Without the hope of immortality, the condition of man is less desirable than that of the beast of the field.

"Or own the soul immortal, or invert
All order. Go, mock majesty! go, man!
And bow to thy superiors of the stall:
Through ev'ry scene of sense superior far:
They graze the turf untill'd; they drink the stream
Unbrew'd and ever full, and unembittered
With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs."

We may well exclaim with Augustin: "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never Is, but always To be blest:
The soul uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

Addison clearly portrays the philosophical mind of Cato in the following lines, which are as commendable for sublimity of expression as for depth of reasoning:

"It must be so. Plato, thou reason'st well!
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass!
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a power above us,
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud
Through all her works) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in, must be happy.

. . . .

The soul secure in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years.
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crush of worlds."

But if our unaided reason assures us that our soul will live beyond the grave, how much more clearly and luminously is this great truth brought home to us by the light of Revelation; for the light of reason is but as the dim twilight compared with the noonday sun of Revelation. How consoling is the thought that the word of God comes to justify and sanction our fondest desires and aspirations for a future life!

"The souls of the just," says the Book of Wisdom, "are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure was taken for misery. . . . . But they are in peace, and their hope is full of immortality."

Man may imprison and starve, may wound and kill the body; but the soul is beyond his reach, and is as impalpable to his touch as the sun's ray. The temple of the body may be reduced to ashes, but the spirit that animated the temple cannot be extinguished. The body, which is from man, man may take away; but the soul, which is from God, no man can destroy. "The dust shall return into its earth from whence it was, and the spirit to God who gave it." "For we know that if our earthly house of this dwelling be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not built with hands, everlasting in the heavens."

The Scripture also declares that the blessed shall be rewarded with never-ending happiness, exempt from all pain and misery: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor wailing, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."

The beatitude of the righteous will essentially consist in the vision and fruition of God: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." "We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."

We can form no adequate idea of the felicity of the Saints, for as the Apostle tells us, it is beyond the reach of human experience, as it is above the power of human conception: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for those who love Him." As well might one born blind attempt to picture to himself the beauty of the landscape, as for the eye of the soul to contemplate the supernal bliss that awaits the righteous in what is beautifully called "the land of the living."

Not only shall the soul possess eternal rest, but the body, companion of its earthly pilgrimage, shall rise again to share in its immortal bliss. Fifteen hundred years before Christ, Job clearly predicts the future Resurrection of the dead as he gazes with prophetic eye on the Redeemer to come: "I know," he says, "that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day, I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God." And the prophecy of the Patriarch is amply confirmed by our Redeemer Himself: "All who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who have done good, shall come forth unto the Resurrection of life."

"The body," says St. Paul, "is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory; it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. . . . . For this corruptible shall put on incorruption: and this mortal shall put on immortality. But when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written: Death is swallowed up in victory."

Whether our immortality will be happy or miserable, rests with ourselves. It rests with ourselves whether we shall be, as the Apostle Jude expresses it, "wandering stars for whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever"; or whether we are destined to be bright stars shining forever in the empyrean of heaven, reflecting the unfading glory of the Sun of Justice. O let us not barter an eternal happiness for a fleeting pleasure! Let us strive by a good life to obtain a blissful immortality. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit also shall reap life everlasting."

When Sir Thomas More was imprisoned in the Tower of London by Henry VIII. for refusing to take an oath that would sully his conscience, he was visited by his wife, who thus bluntly saluted him: "Why, Mr. More, I marvel much that you who have hitherto been taken for a wise man, will now so play the fool as to lie here in this close, filthy prison, shut up with mice and rats, when you might be abroad at your liberty enjoying the favor of the king and council. You might dwell in peace in your fair house at Chelsea with your library, gallery, and garden, and be merry in company with me, your good wife, your children and household."

"Why, good Alice," said he with a winning smile, "is not this prison as near heaven as my own house?"

"Oh! tilly vally! tilly vally!" she replied with a sneer of contempt.

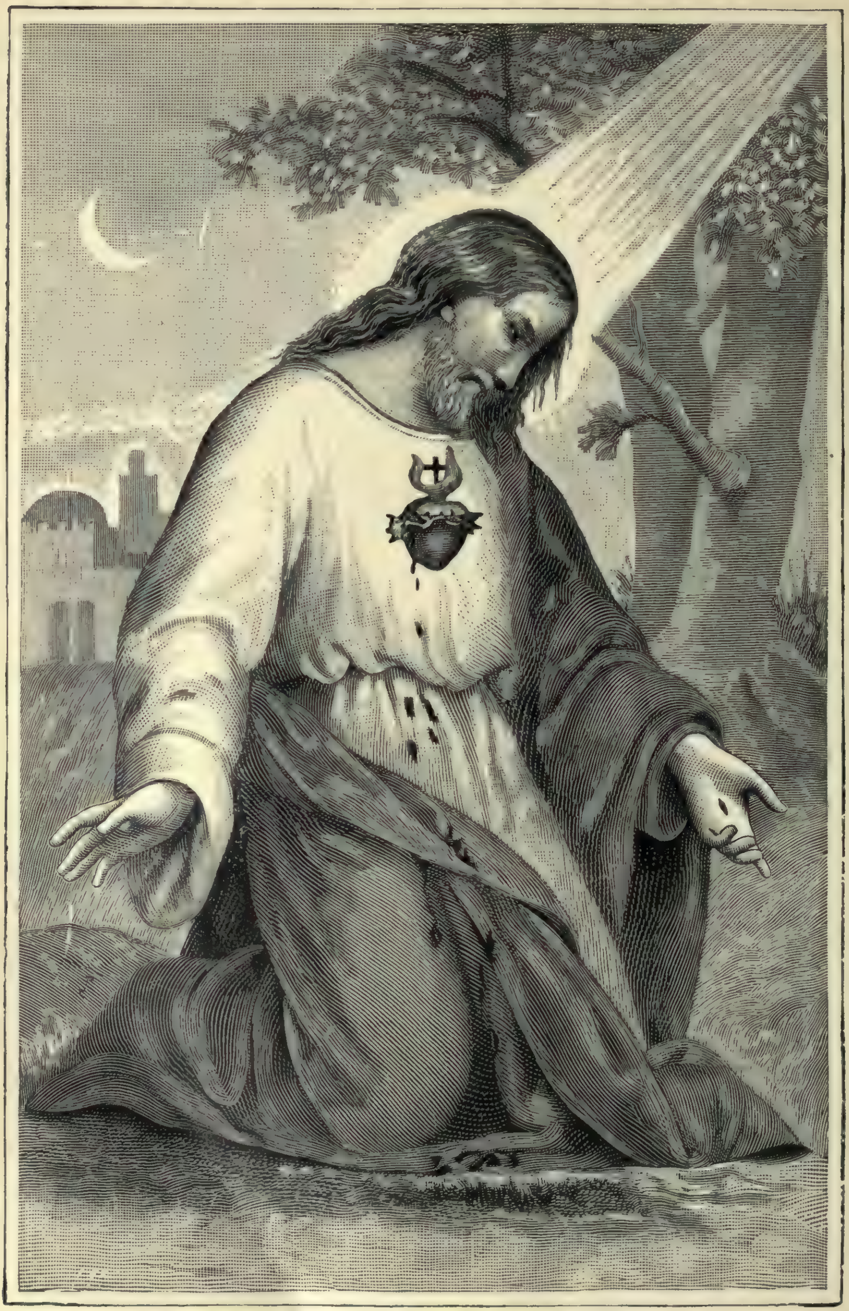
"Nay, then, Alice," More continued, "how long, think you, one might live to enjoy this house of ours?"

"Perhaps some twenty years."

"Well, now, my good Alice, he were a very bad calculator that, for a hundred or a thousand years, would risk the loss of an eternity."

BISHOP CONROY.

Right Reverend GEORGE CONROY, D.D., Apostolic Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland, was born in Ireland in the year 1833. In 1857 he was ordained priest and Doctor of Divinity, and in 1871 Dr. Conroy was elevated to the Episcopacy. In the year 1877 he was appointed Apostolic Delegate to Canada. In 1878 Bishop Conroy made a tour of the United States, and in August of the same year he departed this life, at St. John's, N. F., aged 48 years.



Sorrows of the Sacred Heart.

FEAR OF DIVINE JUSTICE.

"For because sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil, the children of men commit evils without any fear."—ECCLES. viii. 11.

IN that wonderful dialogue in the Book of Job, wherein God condescends to justify His own conduct before His creature, the Almighty explains the want of foresight and the recklessness of consequences apparent in some of the brute creation, by saying that He had deprived them of reason, and that neither did He give them understanding. Only to man did He vouchsafe this gift of reason and understanding, and only in the children of men, therefore, may we expect to find the faculty of comparing one thing with another, of tracing the relation of cause and effect, of forecasting the consequences of present actions, and of estimating their present actions according to the consequences that are to follow them. Elevated by the possession of reason above the level of the rest of creation, man gazes down upon the vast network of cause and effect that girdles and keeps together the universe; and it is at once the title and the privilege of his sovereignty that he can follow out its various threads, as they bind together in various relations being with being, and action with action. Ask of the metaphysician, and he will tell you that the highest function of the mind is nothing higher than this faculty of comparison of relations. Inquire from the philosopher, and you will find that he reserves his praise for that system which teaches us to arrive at general laws by a calm and patient study of particular cases. Listen to the views of a great statesman, and you will find them valuable because they give correctly the bearings of one public act upon another. We should expect that to happen which we really find by experience, that for the reasoning man no act stands by itself, but that it leans on some other, or is the result of some other, or has in itself the virtue to produce some other. But to this rule is it not strange that there should be an exception? And is it not stranger still that this exception should occur in the matter which, of all others, by its transcendent importance demanded the strictest and most careful attention: I mean the commission of mortal sin. The children of men, says the text I have quoted for you, commit evils without any fear. And why? Because they ignore the connection between sin and the punishment of sin; because they separate the crime from its penalty; because they make sin stand by itself, and then draw a curtain between it and the vengeance that follows after it, deliberately banishing that fear which would stir the veil. They teach themselves to think of sin without thinking of its punishment; they say to themselves, "I have sinned, and what harm has befallen me?" And so they go on losing that holy fear which is the beginning of wisdom, until at length they drink in iniquity like water. And how does this come to pass, my brethren? If we analyze the passion of fear we shall find that two distinct ideas go to form it—the apprehension of evil, and the persuasion that such danger threatens ourselves. To destroy fear of God's punishment for sin we must teach ourselves either to believe that there is no such thing, or at least we must have no apprehension of its being likely to overtake us. Now, the Catholic who sins without any fear does not, my brethren, abandon his faith in the existence of punishment for sin. For a man in such a state of sin has no terrors; he feels no fear in offending God; and, beloved brethren, the man who feels no fear in offending God, the man for whom sin is a mere pastime, a thing of nothing, that man does not, at least consciously, believe that there is no punishment for sin. How could he? A God who does not punish evil is a God who shows Himself to be indifferent to evil, and a God who shows Himself indifferent to evil is a God who is regardless of the truth; for what is sin but a lie which falsely proclaims the creature to be more than the Creator, and a God regardless of the truth is no God at all. No! they admit that sin is to be punished. How, then, do they kill this salutary fear? Because they do not see God baring His arm for immediate vengeance after sin, because they do not see the punishment tread close on the sin, they persuade themselves that they have nothing to apprehend, that they may continue to drink in iniquity like water; and so without fear the wicked children of men commit evils against the Most High God. If the murderer's arm should fall powerless before his victim's blood was yet dry upon it; if the blasphemer was stricken dumb before the sound of his evil words had died away; if a foul leprosy should suddenly fall upon the man who should be guilty of those abominations which the Apostle says should be unnamed among us, the sinner could not think of sin as separate from its punishment. But after his sin he finds himself as sound as before; the sun is made to rise as bright for the sinner as for the just; the rains of heaven fertilize the earth for him as well as for the saint; the world's beauty is as fair to his eye as to that of the holiest; in a word, he says: "I have sinned, and what am I the worse for it?" This is, indeed, a delusion, a most fatal delusion, but one for which there is no excuse.

Holy Job exclaims: "O that a man might so be judged with God, as the son of man is judged with his companion!" (Job xvi. 22). If this privilege, which Job sighed for in vain, were granted to such a man as the one we are just considering; if against God's accusation he were allowed to enter a defense of his state of mind, as one man does when engaged in a lawsuit with another, think you, my brethren, that he could find any pretext which could serve to excuse him? To form an accurate judgment on this point, recall to mind the decision given in similar cases in Holy Scripture. "Behold, among His saints none is unchangeable, and the heavens are not pure in His sight. How much more is man abominable, and unprofitable, who drinketh iniquity like water" (Job xv. 15, 16). "Now they have no excuse for their sin," says our Lord, of the world;—and why? "Because I have come and spoken to them." "They are inexcusable," says St. Paul of the pagan philosophers. And why? Because the things that are made testified and showed forth that divinity which they denied. That is to say, according to God's views, the more numerous the witnesses and the clearer their testimony to any truth, the more inexcusable he who refuses to believe it. If, then, the pagan philosophers were without excuse because they closed their ears to the testimony of earth and sky, of night and day, of the starry firmament, as they mutely witness to the existence of God, how much more sins the bad Catholic who hardens his heart against the cloud of witnesses that give evidence of the immediate vengeance taken by God on sinners!—I say a cloud of witnesses, my brethren, for it is a most remarkable fact that God has given examples of speedy vengeance on sin in every class of reasonable beings, in every dispensation with which He has been pleased to visit man, in every class of society, in every age, in every kind of sin, in every country, in every profession, in every state of life. Do you want a witness to God's speedy vengeance from the very sunlight of the world's history? Before the blood of Abel was yet dried upon the earth its cry had drawn from the lips of God a deadly curse on the murderer Cain. And Cain himself lifts up his voice: "Behold Thou dost cast me out this day, this very day of my sin, from the face of the earth."

In the patriarchal age the iniquities of a corrupt world rose up before God in the days of Noah, and in the days of Noah the Deluge bears witnesses as numerous as are the corpses of young and old that are dashed among the waves of its shoreless sea; among pagan populations the unbelieving men of Sodom are struck blind in the very hour of their iniquity, and their city becomes a prey to the flames; in the Jewish dispensation, Core, Dathan, and Abiron, the blasphemers and Sabbath-breakers, are stoned without the camp. In the New Testament, Ananias lies to the Holy Ghost, and immediately falls dead to the ground; Sapphira lies, and the feet of them who have buried her husband are at the door to carry her away. Herod is arrayed in king's apparel, and sitting in the judgment-seat, and the people make exclamation, saying: "It is the voice of a god, not of a man" (Acts xii.). And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honor to God, and being eaten up with worms he gave up the ghost. One such example in each of these dispensations was enough to inspire fear into the men of that time; how is he to be excused who is deaf to their cumulative testimony? Is it not madness to imagine that God will deliberately depart in his case from the law which He followed in the beginning, in the days of the patriarchs, under the law of Moses, in the early days of the Christian Church? We do not dread a repetition of the Deluge, because God has promised that it should not be, and has attested the memory of this promise by the bow that spans the heavens. But is there any promise, any rainbow of hope that He will not punish at once, immediately, irresistibly, the sins we may be guilty of? He has left us no loophole of excuse for so thinking. Do we flatter ourselves that our sins are not such as theirs were, who were punished so promptly? But what kind of sin has He left not punished with instant chastisement: in Adam a simple disobedience, in Cain a deed of blood, in Sodom a sin of lust, in David a sin of vanity, in Aman a sin of words, and in His angels a sin of thought. Do we flatter ourselves that our position will in some measure secure us;—but what station in society has He left without an example? Are we as high as the angels?—and yet He crushed the angels in an instant. Are we as low as the Sodomites?—and yet He slew them immediately. Are we in a position of worldly greatness? Herod was so great that he was called a god, and yet he was struck down. Are we rich?—so was Herod; are we poor?—so were Ananias and Sapphira; are we old?—so was Heli; are we young?—so was Cain.

In view of these terrible judgments of God, how can the sinner persuade himself that his punishment is only in the long future? How can the soul now stained with sin flatter itself that it will have time to enjoy sin now, and leisure to repent hereafter? How can a Catholic surrender his heart to temptation, with the idea that the punishment is so remote? Not so did David: "*Confige timore tuo carnes meas*"; and why? "*A judiciis enim tuis timui.*" Then, there can be no excuse for such a frame of mind; it is unreasonable, inexcusable. That men should sin at all is inexcusable; but that they should perpetrate evils without any fear, because they refuse to think of the punishment of sin, is most inexcusable. But here it may be said that my argument has been one-sided, and therefore not to be trusted. No doubt it will be urged, God has in all ages and in all circumstances given many and terrible proofs of His prompt justice; but in relating the history of such examples we should not exclude the many instances of patient endurance, and of long-suffering with sinners which He has exhibited. And perhaps the words of the apostle may be quoted against us, "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness, and patience, and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leads thee to penance?" (Rom. ii. 4). And do not the very words of the text suppose that at least now and then the interval between the sin and its punishment is not of the shortest, that sentence is not speedily pronounced against evil?

I know, my brethren, that God is long-suffering with sinners, and that He waiteth patiently to have mercy on them. If I were cruel enough to deny it, the history of our own lives would rise in witness against me. Yes, my brethren, it is true and I admit it, we sin, and yet the arrows of the divine punishments of which David speaks do not reach us. But why?—Is it because those arrows have not been aimed at us? Is it because having been aimed they have not flown? Is it because having been aimed and having flown they have not known how to hit the guilty breast? No; for none of these reasons; but because, between avenging heaven and sinful earth, the sinner and his judge, uprose the pure and holy figure of Jesus Christ, baring His breast so as to intercept the shaft in its flight toward us, receiving the bruises that were to punish our iniquities, and mangled with the wounds that were to avenge our sins. We are in peace because He took upon Himself the chastisement which was to bring us peace; in one word, my brethren, we have escaped thus long from the punishment of our sins, only because, as Isaias says, Jesus Christ on the cross hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors. And is it upon long-suffering such as this, which Mercy has purchased from Justice at so fearful a price as the Blood of the Son of God, that you would reckon in order to be able to sin without any fear? Oh, the unspeakable meanness, the incredible selfishness of the man who says to himself, "I will sin without fear, because another has undertaken to bear the first brunt of the punishment; I will sin without fear, because Christ has prayed for pardon for me, because He has died to obtain for me time for repentance." "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Such a one, my brethren, would efface these tender and loving words from the millions of hearts in which they are inspired, and would substitute in their stead words so blasphemous, so hideous, that I can hardly bear to repeat them. "Father," he would force the dying lips of Jesus to utter, "Father, these men know that I am dying for them; they know that this crown of thorns, these cruel nails, these cruel wounds, are the marks of punishment due to their sins; they know that Thy justice will be appeased by my sufferings; they know that Thy right hand is disarmed by my death, and for this reason do they sin without any fear, do Thou, therefore, Father, forgive them, because, knowing all this, they nevertheless sin against Thee. Father, forgive them, because they know not what they do!"

The delay of punishment, therefore, because it is a proof of love, and because through it God endeavors to win the sinner to justice, should not destroy fear in his heart. Nor, my brethren, have you any right to think that such delay is a delay of love; it is in itself the most terrible sign of God's wrath. There is a long-suffering on the part of God, which, the apostle tells us, is intended for penance: but there is a long-suffering which, the same apostle declares, is intended to show wrath. God, willing to show His wrath, and make known His power, did what?—did He judge the nations, did He fill up ruin, did He crush the heads of His foes? No, but He did what was far more terrible, "He endured with much patience vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." "God has been patient with you in your sins," I would say to the man whom this very patience makes courageous, "but has He shown you a patience of love, or a patience of vengeance? Am I to congratulate you as being the object of the unspeakable love of God, or am I to weep over you as the victim of His most deadly vengeance?" This is a question of the greatest importance to you, and it is a question you can answer in some measure for yourselves. As light differs from darkness, as day from night, so does the patience born of mercy differ in its effects from the patience born of the wrath of God. The Magdalen was waited for and she came not as yet; He still waited for her and she laid aside her sin, and grace superabounded where sin had abounded before. The philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome were waited for, and they came not; God ordered them, and they came not; and then He left them to the desire of their own hearts, to a life filled with all iniquity, and malice, and fornication, and avarice, and wickedness, while they gilded over all these with the name of wisdom, of good common sense; for professing to be wise, they became fools. In which of these two ways does God's patience affect your life? Is yours the life of a Christian who, crying out to God from the depths, keeps up a daily, steady warfare against the sins and temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; or do you live only to gratify all the desires of your own hearts, forgetful of the evil past? Do you, like Magdalen, draw near to Jesus Christ, to look for the forgiveness you feel you do not deserve, or do you keep away weeks and months, and perhaps years from the sacraments of the Catholic Church, where you may find Him and His grace? Do you give the reasonable service of love and obedience to the faith and the practices of the Church, or do you form the judgment which the world passes on the supernatural, becoming fools when you profess to be most wise? These are questions, this an investigation I have neither the power nor the will to pursue further: but if you find that your life is similar to that of the philosopher, must you not fear that the patience God is certain to show you is the patience of vengeance? Must you not doubt that while you become fearless at what you think delays punishment, that supposed delay was itself punishment of the most terrible order?—and is it possible that any one can close his heart against the fear of God for such a delay of punishment?

This, then, my brethren, is the case I make: the Holy Scripture complains that men sin without any fear, and that they are without fear because they do not see sentence immediately pronounced upon evil. Now, no man, in view of the numberless instances of prompt vengeance, can with any security believe for a moment that God will not punish him at once; and if he have any apparent reason to think that God is waiting for him in mercy, he is surely not warranted by such reason to exclude fear from his heart, especially as he cannot be certain that the very delay of punishment is not in itself a most terrible punishment. What, then, are we to do? We are to identify in our minds the thought of sin and of its punishment, we are not to think of sin without thinking of its penalty, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Should our memory recall the thoughts of the past, we are to think of it as having entailed on us a punishment which penance only can remove; should sin present itself in the present or future, let us remember that, however seductive its beauty, it has infallibly, inseparably connected with it the avenging punishment of God.

Yet our fear must not be a grossly servile fear: it must not be that cowardly fear which checks only the hand from the evil deed which the heart continues to desire; but that rational fear, which while it checks the hand from doing, teaches the heart not to lose itself in guilty desires. "*Bonus est*," says St. Augustine, "*iste timor utilis est.*" Nor, my brethren, are you to rest at this: you are to love God as well as to fear Him. God calls for your love, for a deep, tender, personal, supreme love. Perhaps as yet this love for God is but a tender, fragile seedling springing up in your hearts; if so, then let fear be its prop and its support, and when your love has grown to ripeness, fear shall fall away and leave your love alone. You shall be alone with God; for God is love, and loving Him and loved by Him, you will taste forever the unspeakable sweetness of the saying of St. John, "Perfect charity casteth out fear."

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT.

"Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return."

AFTER many days' wandering in the desert of Bersabee, the forlorn Agar perceived at length that the hand of death was upon her son Ismael. With keenest grief she laid him down in the shade of "one of the trees that were there, and she went her way, and sat over-against him a great way off, as far as a bow can carry, for she said: I will not see the boy die: and sitting over-against, she lifted up her voice and wept" (Gen. xxi. 15, 16). This mother, my brethren, could not endure to witness the agony which death was about to bring upon her child; she fled from the sight of the sorrow and desolation which death in its approach casts like a shadow upon the soul. Far different is the conduct of our mother, the Church, toward us at the commencement of this holy season of Lent. Not only does she bear to look upon the sorrow that settles on our heart at the thought of death, but she deliberately sets herself to produce that sorrow. Unlike Agar, she bursts into no passionate wailing over our coming doom, but she makes her voice stern enough to tell us herself of the sentence passed against us; far from shunning what would remind her of our death, she realizes it by a most striking symbol, when with her own hand she strews with ashes each proudest, and noblest, and fairest brow of the children of men; ashes to ashes, dust to dust; mingling the ashes that are dead with the ashes yet alive, that the lifeless clay may remind its kindred clay, so soon to be lifeless, that man is dust, and unto dust fated to return. How is this, my brethren? Why is it that the mother who bears man into this world weeps to see death's sadness on him, while the mother who brings man forth for heaven seems to be glad that he should thus sorrow? Why is it that the one cannot bear to look upon his anguish, while the other herself bids his tears to flow, and would fain by her stern message have him taste all the bitterness of the memory of death? And yet, my brethren, in that stern message there is an undertone of love, with which the Church seems to say to us what the apostle said to the Corinthians: "Although I made you sorrowful by my words, I do not repent: and if I did repent, seeing that the same (though but for a time) did make you sorrowful, now I am glad: not because you are made sorrowful, but because you are made sorrowful unto penance; . . . . for the sorrow that is according to God worketh penance unto salvation" (2 Cor. vii. 8–10). In awakening in us at this time the thoughts of our coming death, the Church intends not to fill us with melancholy, but to lead us to penance. The memory of death scatters broadcast the seeds of sorrow, but upon the growing sorrow the Church would engraft what will bring forth fruits worthy of penance. Death is our punishment, she would make it our remedy; death is the penalty of sin, she would teach us, by the message of the text to-day, how to change it into an incentive to virtue.

And, first of all, observe, my brethren, that she does not present herself as if announcing some new truth hitherto unknown to you; she does but exhort you to remember, to recall to your mind what you have had occasion to learn before now. She would have you bring before your mind that scene on the threshold of Eden, when first this dread sentence was pronounced, when an angry God disclosed to guilty man: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. iii. 19). Such recollections cannot fail to lead us to penance. Remember that this so much dreaded death is but the punishment of sin, and that sin is the cause of death. Had there been no sin, then there had been no death, for God would have hedged in man from its inroads. By one man sin came into the world, and by sin death. How, then, can man go on cherishing and loving that very sin which has brought upon us an evil we so much fear? Let sin be ever so attractive, let it be decked with all that is bright, and fascinating, and winning, we can never approach it without approaching at the same time that death which ever follows it as closely as shadow follows upon sunshine. The honey on which Jonathan feasted was luscious and delightful; but, think you, would he have enjoyed its sweetness had he known, as later he knew, that under its sweetness lurked the bitterness of death? "Fasting, I have tasted a little honey, and so I must die." If death be an evil, then sin must be an evil; if death be no evil, why does the Church's message of to-day cast gloom upon our souls?

Remember, besides, who it is that inflicts death as the punishment of sin. It is God: that is to say, a Being so just that He cannot exceed in the severity of His punishments, a Being so holy that He cannot harbor thoughts of undue resentment, a Being so merciful that all His works are tempered with tenderest compassion. And yet this just, and holy, and merciful God has judged that death, the greatest of earthly evil; death, that has brought upon man woes innumerable, is but part of the fitting punishment deserved by sin. Sin, therefore, must be an evil so great that the death we dread is scarcely its equivalent; and remembering this, how are we not moved to detest the blindness which has taught us to prize what we should most abhor. Remember, again, how strangely sin has affected the almighty power of God. What could be more loving and tender than what God's power did, before His anger was stirred by sin, for His creature man? How fair the earth God had created for his use! how pleasant the paradise planted for his enjoyment! how light the command laid upon him to be the source of merit! how joyous the life He gave him! how beautiful the soul, rich in a thousand gifts of nature and of grace! All God's power seems to have been busied about him, to bless him and make him happy; and yet, such was the poison of one sin, that this power, hitherto omnipotent to bless, became omnipotent to punish. Paradise was lost, God's graces and gifts were forfeited, the earth became a place of misery, man's life a weary struggle with sorrow, and disease, and toil, to end at last in the grand defeat of death. Is it not madness, then, on the part of sinners, to go on deliberately to outrage that God whose power to punish sin is so mighty? God gave Adam a command; Adam broke it and sinned; and swift upon his sin came punishment with all the might of an angry God. God gave us commands; we break them and sin: upon what grounds dare we hope to escape?

And if the circumstances under which this message had been first delivered dispose us to penance, much more so does the substance of the message itself, by what it tells both of our present state and of what one day is to happen to us. "Remember, man, that thou art dust." This is said to each one of us in particular. When we think of death, we generally think of it as it affects others, or we reason about it as about a question of philosophy in the abstract; but with the thoughts of our own death we do what we do with the dead themselves, we hurry to hide them and bury them deep out of sight. Death in connection with ourselves we see only in the long future, and by aid of this convenient abstraction we are enabled to give ourselves up to seek for our happiness among the sensible goods of this earth. But the recollection that we are dust must perforce detach us from that inordinate love of pleasures, and riches, and honors which makes up all the sin of our lives. It is because we implicitly promise ourselves many years of life, that with the infidels in the Scripture, we seek so keenly for pleasure, saying with them: "Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine, and ointments, and let not the flower of the time pass by us: let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered: let no meadow escape our riot: let none of us go without his part in luxury" (Wisd. ii.). But even while these words are on our lips we are warned that we are but dust, and that we are to die we know not how soon. If we resolve upon sinful enjoyment of the good things that are present, death may smite us down in their midst; the time we destine for delight may be the hour of our agony; we may die before the roses are withered which we gather for our revels; the meadow we select for our joyous riot may be our grave. This unbridled lust of pleasure, this life of mere enjoyment on the part of men, who are but dust, is called by the Holy Ghost blindness and malice, even in those infidels who knew not the secrets of God, nor hoped for the wages of justice. And yet to these men death meant simply annihilation. "Our body shall be ashes," said they, "and our spirit shall be poured abroad as the soft air . . . . like a mist which is driven away by the beams of the sun." And if even in those darkened souls the lust of pleasure was blindness and malice, what is it in us who know the secrets of God, who believe that the wages of our deeds await us beyond the grave, who are certain that when our bodies die our souls shall live forevermore? We know death is to the sinner the beginning of endless misery; we know that between sinful pleasures and the awful anger of the living God there is but the barrier of the moment of death; and since we are but dust, that death may come upon us at any moment. Is it not, then, almost incredible audacity to persevere in sin, since the very God we outrage is He who holds in His hands our life and our death? Daniel had no language to depict the folly of the hapless king more forcible than this: "The God who hath thy breath in His hand, and all thy ways, thou hast not glorified." With the lust of pleasure mingles the fever of struggle for success, of money-making, of business, of achieving position—things good enough in their way, but which, through our own fault, overmaster us by the hold they have upon us.

And, again, we complacently recite to our own hearts the list of the honors we have achieved and the riches we have accumulated, and we say, like the rich man in the Gospel: "My soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years' enjoyment; take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer." The worldly goods to which we cling are, no doubt, enough for the enjoyment of many years, but who will promise us the many years wherein to enjoy them? The announcement made to that rich man: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" is re-echoed in the message delivered to us to-day—that we are dust. Give a man the best position that even his greedy heart can desire; let him enjoy all that makes the prizes of life, the struggle for which absorbs us so often to the forgetfulness of our souls' concerns; give him wealth, and reputation, and honored name; and when he shall have become what Job was in the bloom of his prosperity, great among all the people of his country, what is he, after all, but a passing stranger in the midst of all his greatness? Should he call himself owner of those goods, ask him to prove his title by retaining them as his own forever; and if, being dust, he cannot retain them, if he is to go out from amongst them stripped of all his riches, then he is but a sojourner, and not a master. And if so, shall we neglect for those things, which in spite of ourselves we must leave, the care of our souls, and thereby forfeit the riches that remain forever?

Finally, my brethren, we are warned to-day of something which is one day to happen to us, and in this warning we are once more exhorted to penance: "Into dust thou shalt return." These words tell us of a sore affliction coming upon us which can find no consolation but in God. God has been so merciful toward us as to hide from us the day in which our dissolution shall take place; but we are here reminded that it is inevitable, and that one dreadful moment shall come for each one of us, in which others will tell us, or we shall tell ourselves, "For me life is over; I must die." My brethren, who but God alone can soften the bitter agony of that awful moment? All the goods of earth, all the science, all the love of our nearest and dearest, all the strength of our own manhood—of what avail will they be to lighten that supreme sorrow? Ezechias was a sovereign whose life had been spent amid all that makes life sweet; and yet, upon hearing the words, "thou shalt die and shalt not live," he wept with much weeping. Saul had a daring spirit, and yet when he heard from Samuel that on the morrow he should die, he fell forthwith on the ground, for he was frightened with the words. Even to those who have lost all, that moment is full of anguish. Agag, deprived of crown, country, friends, liberty, yet cried out at the approach of death, Oh! bitter death, "doth bitter death separate in this manner?" Darker than the gloom that encompassed him, wilder than the passionate hate of his foes, was the fear that rushed in upon him at the sight of his coming death. But if we would learn how weak and panic-stricken one feels in the awful presence of death, look in the Garden of Olives, at the prostrate figure of Him in whom our human nature existed in its highest and most perfect form. And if He found no consolation in His sorrow save in this, that He was doing the will of His Father, if the comfort that came to Him came only from the angels of God, where shall we turn for our comfort and consolation except to that same God? But if, through neglect of penance, we have made that God our enemy, how will it add to our desolation to think that we are about to fall into the hands of the living, outraged God? But if before that moment we shall have done penance, if we shall have bewailed our sins and made God's will the rule of our life, oh! how sweet it will be to return to dust in those same hands that once from the dust had moulded us, those very hands which for us, penitent sinners, were crucified for love! What though at that moment our poor nature cannot unlearn its lifelong fear of death; what though death appears to claim victory over us, His love will mingle with our fear, as in the dawn light mingles with the darkness; and we shall know that He has wrested from the grave its victory, from death its sting. No; the torment of death shall not touch the souls of the just, since through death Christ hath destroyed him who had the empire of death, and delivered them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude (Heb. ii. 14, 15). But all this happiness, all this consolation, belongs only to those who shall have done penance.

Remember, then, my brethren, that you are dust, and that into dust you shall return, and let the remembrance serve to excite within you the spirit of penance; let it teach you to abhor the sin which has been the cause of your death, the sin of whose malignity its woes are but the faint expression, the sin whose poison changed life into death; let the thought that you are dust detach you from all inordinate love of the pleasures, and riches, and honors of this world, so that in seeking them and using them you may not neglect the eternal welfare of your souls. Let the thought of your coming dissolution move you to lay up treasures of consolation for the suffering of the day of affliction. But lest in these thoughts you may be overwhelmed with too great sadness, bear in mind that if the thought that you are dust stirs up terror in your heart, that self-same thought that you are dust awakens in God's heart an inexpressible tenderness and compassion toward you. "He knoweth our frame," saith the Psalmist; "He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. cii. 13, 14). And therefore "as a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him." Your very terror of death may thus be made an argument of confidence. The more terrible it is, the more tender and compassionate toward you becomes the heart of your Father who is in heaven. Even in the very moment of our death, when at last that punishment of sin shall have overtaken us trembling, we have the right to call upon God no longer by the name of Judge, but by the meet name of Father, and into that Father's hands we may with confidence commend our spirit. Thus did the Church, by her sanctifying touch, convert our natural sorrow for death into a sorrow according to the Lord which worketh penance unto salvation. And thus by the almost omnipotent efficacy of penance the Justice and the Mercy of God are made to meet over the head of the dying penitent Christian; and if Justice exacts death as the punishment of sin, Mercy makes out of the punishment itself a stronger claim to pardon. And thus by virtue of penance in death are blended together God's forgiveness and man's sorrow, like light and darkness in the twilight when the dawn is breaking in the East; and thus, through penance, is the sadness of death evermore swallowed up in the joy of victory.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

IF external honor rendered to the Passion of Christ is all that Christ asks from us Christians, then, my brethren, you have every reason to hope that your Saviour looks down upon you to-day with eyes of satisfaction and love. As a Christian is known by the sign of the cross, so the very situation of your town is made manifest to the traveller, when still far from it, by this beautiful church, which, crowning this height, is raised, as it were, between your homes and the heavens, a link between both, through which your prayers ascend, to descend in a thousand graces from God upon you. And what feeling has raised this church but a desire to do honor to that altar on which day after day the death of the Lord is shown forth? God has been lavish to your native spot, and has poured over its hills and valleys a wealth of beauty, of which only rare drops are bestowed elsewhere; and you have in return remembered Him. If His hand has crowded beauties about you, for your benefit, your hands have not been slack in crowding beauties about His cross for the honor of that same. And to-day, my brethren, you are here to add another work of heaven to His Passion by erecting here the Stations of the Cross, whereby you may be enabled ever to keep before your eyes the thought of all that your Redeemer has suffered for you. To honor the Passion you have searched the bosom of the earth for the hard rock which you moulded into springing columns and clustering arches; to honor the Passion you have sought for trees in the forest which you might shape into goodly forms of use and beauty for this edifice; to honor the Passion you have brought from nature the wax of the teeming bee, from industry the labors of the loom to adorn the altar, the fairest flowers of the garden to perfume the sanctuary; you have made even the sunlight of heaven tributary to your reverence, since you will not allow its rays to fall upon the tabernacle, but across rich colors, from which you teach it to burn new glory and new beauty; and to-day you have assembled in crowds to put up another and most explicit testimony of the honor in which you hold your Redeemer's sufferings. If, then, external honor is all that is required by God, never did people better fulfil their duty than you; but you know well, my brethren, that the God who complained of the Jews that they honored Him with their lips, whilst their hearts were far from Him, does not stand in need of our goods, but of our hearts; that all we do for Him is unprofitable unless it be the type of the homage of our heart. The external honor we pay Him should be like an impression on wax, of which the seal is the love of our hearts. And, to speak more especially of what we are doing to-day, do you think that God would value your offerings if they were nothing more than simple ornaments such as men set up in their homes? Do you think that He would esteem them unless as the expression of the feelings excited in you by Him for His sorrows? He certainly would not: He wants not our images, nor our paintings, who made all things. Those paintings, therefore, are for each one of you an act by which you express the feelings that our Saviour's sufferings have excited in you. Now I would have you to remember, my brethren, that the events of the Passion, when they really occurred, were seen by very different people, and excited very different feelings in them according to their different dispositions. The Jews saw the Passion, and Mary saw the Passion; the same persons were under the eyes of both, the same words fell upon their ears. But, oh, how far different were the judgments and the feelings that were borne by each! The one consented to the suffering, the other's heart was rent by it. Now, my brethren, in the same way the events of the cross are represented on these pictures, and, as we said, God accepts from each of you these pictures as an expression of the feelings His sufferings have awakened in your hearts: the figures are the same, but the feelings may be different; if so, my brethren, in the eyes of God to-day these stations have as many different meanings as your hearts have thoughts about Christ. A picture is but a painted word, and a word is but the expression of a thought; these pictures, then, represent Christ as you conceive of Him in your hearts. Such, then, as Christ is in your thoughts, such shall He be before God in the pictures you present to Him. It is necessary, therefore, my brethren, that you should carefully inspect and examine what kind of feelings are those which fill your hearts to-day about the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

My brethren, I would do an injustice to you if even for a moment I could suspect that among you there is even one who in the devotion of this day does not wish to pay a tribute of respect and tender affection to our Saviour. I will be your spokesman. "Yes, O my Saviour, my outraged, insulted Lord, elsewhere, indeed, this morning ungrateful men may insult Thee and spurn Thee, elsewhere men may heap contumely on Thy holy person; but here, here at least, there is a faithful people, each one of whom is anxious, in the devotion of this day,, to salute Thee with honor, and reverence, and respect. Elsewhere men may turn their backs upon Thee, but there is not one here who does not long to approach near to Thee, to press his sinful lips to the hem of Thy garment, for we hardly dare to touch Thy divine face; elsewhere let men revile Thee in words; of all those present there is not one who will not bid Thee hail a thousand times." But even while I speak, my brethren, a cold chill falls across my soul, and a terrible thought checks my utterances. Did not Judas say as much to Jesus as I have now said for you? Did he not approach our Lord with downcast, reverent eyes as you have done? Did he not come close to Him, did he not open his accursed arms to embrace Him, did he not press the Lamb to his perjured heart, did he not fix upon the countenance of the Holy of Holies a kiss of tender salutation as warm as yours? Could it be possible, then, my brethren, that there is any one among you whose devotion to-day is only an act of treachery and hypocrisy as was that of Judas? Can it be possible that there is any one to whom at this moment our Lord is saying, as He sees him before Him taking part in worship, "Judas, wouldst thou then betray the Son of Man with a kiss? Dost thou come here to betray me by joining in devotion to my honor?" Oh, my brethren, I am compelled to believe that it is possible. Judas was an apostle, you are not so high; Judas was the chosen friend of Christ, you have not had that grace; what Judas did, you may do. Perhaps the mark of Judas is on some of your souls to-day;—and what is in this mark? Avarice, my brethren, and greed of unjust gain. If there be any one here to-day, who, for the sake of gaining a few shillings, or less, would not hesitate to commit sins, and sell his God; if there be any one who has laid up to himself the property of another;—that man has the mark of Judas upon him; and to-day, my brethren, whilst he is here pretending to pay respect to his God, he is betraying his Saviour with a kiss.

Did Judas honor Christ, although he kissed Him so reverently? No, no, but he insulted Him by his pretended devotion far more than if he had struck Him a blow. Think of these two things—Judas devout to Christ, and Judas selling Him for thirty pieces—and answer me, could Christ accept his homage? Then say of yourself: I am here to-day to venerate the Passion of Christ, when I know that I have sold Him for a little unjust gain: and answer, can Christ accept your devotion to-day? Oh, no, my brethren, if you would please Christ to-day you must have all the respect of Judas without any of his hypocrisy; you must not only show but feel love for Christ under all circumstances.

I ask you, then, to-day, do your hearts glow with love for your suffering Lord? I do not mean apparent love, superficial love, but that love of which Augustine says, *vera devotio imitare quod colimus*—a love not of words, but of deeds, a love of the crucifix which crucifies the world to you, and you to the world: a love which makes you mortify your passions because Christ is suffering for you, which makes you given to penance because Christ is hanging on the cross, which teaches you to keep in check every desire. My question, then, means, do you love suffering, denial of self-gratification, penance, abstaining from the pleasures of the world, because Christ is overwhelmed with such? I will not conceal from myself, my brethren, that it is hard for our hearts to love Christ's suffering in this way. Our hearts are so fond of pleasure, of indulging in what is gay, and bright, and happy, that they find great difficulty in loving a Saviour whose soul is one sea of sorrow and tenderness, whose body is one mass of bruises, whose very sight puts to flight the follies and the pleasures we love in the world. But if you have not this in some measure, how can you say that you sympathize with Jesus?—for sympathy means fellowship in suffering, and if you love not such suffering as Christ bears, how can you say you share it with Him? It would not be so hard, you think, to love Him as He was when a tender infant, or when He healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind, and made the lame to walk, and raised the dead to life; but it is hard to love Him bruised, melancholy, sombre, and grieving. My brethren, it is for that very reason we ought to love Him; it is because He is filled with suffering that you ought to love Him.

You might have some excuse for not loving Him, suffering as He is, if, when He began to love you, He found you exposed to no suffering or saddened by no calamity. If He came to you and found you happy, cheerful, a source of joy, not condemned to any punishment, and if He loved you as such;—then, perhaps, you might refuse Him your love because He was not so happy as you, but rather covered with woe. Now, in what condition did our Saviour find you? Can there be any state imagined more full of suffering than ours? In our soul—in our body—in our sickness—death—hell? Call to mind all the punishments due to sin, multiply them as often as sin has been committed in the world, then say these sufferings were to be undergone by me when my Saviour first loved me; if, then, Christ so loved you, although condemned to such punishments as these, ought you not in return love Him, although He is filled with suffering, as you see?

You should share His sufferings, then, my brethren, even although they were altogether His own. But, O my God, are these sufferings—the very sight of which often saddens us—are they His, or not rather ours? Surely He had no suffering of His own, that is, none that He did not endure for our salvation. "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed" (Isaias liii. 4, 5). Whence, then, came this sea of suffering? for as man, Christ's body was sinless, and, if sinless, therefore painless. Add up all that He endured: poverty, neglect, insult, scorn, the crown of thorns, the scourge, the crucifixion;—they are yours, not His. And shall we not love Him the more for the very reason that He is so afflicted, so bruised? seeing, too, that He most deliberately accepted them all for our sake.

Not only are they our sufferings, but He shows Himself most loving when He is most covered with wounds. We should then love Christ most when He is most loving to us. But He is then most loving to us when He is most covered with wounds. His whole life is an act of love toward us; but there are times when His love surged up in waves of greater strength, glowed in flames of greater intensity. What are the occasions when this so happened? When He speaks of His Passion. Hear the words of burning love He then addresses to us: "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how I am straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke xii. 50). "The chalice that my Father gave me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11). "Having loved those that were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John xiii. 1). Nay, He Himself, like a true lover, has insisted that we should remember Him, that we should ever keep His memory green in our hearts. When we wish to live in the memory of our friends, my brethren, do we not desire to be remembered in the most agreeable light, with most love and greatest affection? Well, then, "this do ye in commemoration of me." He might have wished to be remembered as an infant, as an obedient child, as a benefactor of our race, as a king, as a wonder-worker; but no, He wished rather to live in our memories as suffering for us. Would it not, then, be the blackest ingratitude on our part to love Him less for that very reason by which He proves that He loves us most? But it is hard to love suffering with a heart that is inclined to love pleasure. It is hard to forego present pleasures and present honors out of love for a suffering Redeemer who is *not* present, and whom we do not see. Company, jests, amusements, gain, take a great hold on the heart, and it is hard to banish them all to go share the sufferings of the Crucified. Is it so, my brethren, is it so? Is it difficult to forget present pleasure for future good? if so, then, how do you spend your days in hard toil and not in pleasure? Is it hard to forego present gain? If so, why do you commit to the ground so much seed with the hope of future harvest? How do men spend time, money, pains, health, life, were fatigue ever unbearable and future joy of no value? Is it possible that only where Christ is concerned difficulties will spring up; only when sin is to be avoided that future enjoyment will be valueless?

But granted that it is so difficult, that the heart dreads pain and suffering; for that very reason we ought to be devout to the Passion of Christ. You say that the heart is made for enjoyment; I say that it is made for sorrow and suffering. Sin and sorrow may tarry apart for a while, but in the end they come together. Every one must suffer sorrow and pain in life or death. If so, my brethren, is it not better so to live as to have in our day of need comfort, alleviation, succor in our distress? The question is answered by being asked. But where can the heart find such so truly as in the Passion of Christ? In our distress, and especially in our death, it will be our refuge in fear, our comfort in pain.

Well then, my brethren, I will ask you once more before I present in your name these Stations, do your hearts glow with love for the Passion of Christ? He found you suffering and still loved you;—would you refuse to love Him because He suffered? His sufferings were not His, but yours; will you not love Him who did this for you? He suffered to show His love for you; will you fear to love Him? Will you refuse to do for Him what you do for the world? Will you deprive yourself of all the help of His Passion? No; behold, then, O Saviour, the people devout to Thy person; let these Stations be a pledge of their love.

DANGEROUS READING.

WE cannot better describe the use and the abuse of the art of printing than by employing the language of two illustrious Roman Pontiffs, who ruled the Church, the one at the commencement of Protestantism, the other in our own day, when the deadly effects of that heresy have reached their development. Leo the Tenth, in the tenth session of the Council of Lateran, declares that the "art of printing has been happily and usefully invented for the glory of God, for the increase of the faith, and for the diffusion of the sciences."

This was in the first days of the Reformation. During the three hundred years that followed, Protestantism arrogated to itself unchecked power over the press, which it declared to be a creation peculiarly its own, and, at the end of that period, Gregory the Sixteenth thus describes the result: "We are filled with horror in seeing what monstrous doctrines, or rather what prodigies of error, we are inundated with through that deluge of books, of pamphlets, and of works of all kinds, the lamentable inroad of which has spread a curse upon the face of the earth."

This testimony of the Pontiff is borne out by every man who has the interests of religion and the welfare of modern society at heart. We shall mention two facts which must impress even the most careless. In France a commission appointed by the Government some years ago to investigate the results of the system of book-hawking (*colportage*), in its official report addressed to the Minister of the Interior, declared that of the nine millions of works which that system scattered broadcast among the populace, "eight-ninths, that is to say, eight millions, were books more or less immoral."

In England we know, on undisputed authority, that infidel and immoral literature is a most widespread evil. Of Combe's "Constitution of Man," a work of materialistic tendency, and based on a denial of Providence, more than eighty thousand copies issued from the English press. The total annual issue of immoral publications amounts to twenty-nine millions. In 1851, the purely infidel press in London issued more than twelve millions of publications; the issues of avowed atheism being more than six hundred and fifty thousand. All this is exclusive of newspapers.

Now, as the literatures of France and England divide between them the attention of the entire world, this luxuriance of infidel and immoral publications in the two countries is an argument from which we may safely conclude that the evils deplored by the Pontiff are almost coextensive with what is called modern civilization.

This multiplication of bad books is one of the most deadly plagues of modern society. Men's minds have become so fascinated by the glories of the boasted liberty of the press, so impatient of all control, especially in the matter of reading, so negligent of the precautions suggested by the commonest prudence, that the pernicious influences exercised by this noxious literature are telling on every side. The spirit of faith is weakened; Christian purity of conscience is sullied; serious and solid studies are in no esteem; *the whole head is sick, the whole heart is sad.*

An evil so crying as this, and fraught with such consequences to the religious and social condition of our country, imperatively demands a remedy. It is not in our power to propose a remedy which should meet all the exigencies of the case; but, at least, we can remind Catholic readers of what their duty requires from them in this matter. We say to them, therefore, that they are not free to roam at will through the world of books, reading whatever they please, no matter how pernicious to their faith or morals; but, on the contrary, they are bound to subject their reading to a wholesome discipline, steadfastly refusing to themselves and to those under their charge, not only such books as are positively hurtful, but even such as are dangerous.

Authority and reason unite in recommending this rule. Even Paganism in its least corrupt form felt and acknowledged this truth, that the true object of reading was to instruct, not to pervert. Their libraries bore the noble inscription of *treasure-houses of remedies for the soul.* The Jews were naturally still more jealous of all that could injure the faith or morals of God's chosen people. Eusebius tells us that the holy king Ezechias committed to the flames certain works ascribed to Solomon, fearing lest the people should, by their perusal, be seduced to idolatry. Even the Holy Scriptures themselves were not placed indiscriminately in the hands of all; young persons, until they reached the age of thirty, according to St. Jerome, or twenty-five, according to St. Gregory Nazianzen, were not allowed to read Genesis, certain chapters of Ezechiel, and the Canticle of Canticles.

The early Christians were still more remarkable for the caution with which they avoided dangerous books. Of this we have a notable example recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, how many of those who had followed curious things, brought all their books together, and burnt them before all; and so many or so valuable were the bad books thus consumed that, the price of them being computed, the money was found to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. Nor did this spirit decay as time progressed. When heretics were converted to the faith they were not received into the Church except upon the condition of giving publicly to the flames the suspected books of which they were in possession. The General Council (second) of Constantinople, and the General Council (second) of Nice, issued one common anathema against heretics and their books.

In the early part of the fifth century Pope Anastasius condemned Origen, his doctrines and his books, the reading of which he forbade to the faithful. In 446, Pope Leo the Great made search in every direction for the books of the Manichæans, and succeeded in destroying a large quantity of them; and, in the following year, the same Pontiff wrote to the bishops of Spain, exhorting them to destroy the books of the Priscillianists. It is not necessary to dwell here upon the enactments made to the same effect on this subject by later Pontiffs; and no one can be ignorant how anxiously they have endeavored to restrain the unbridled license of the corrupt press. Suffice it to say that, as concerning bad books, the Catholic Church has a clearly defined policy of her own, and that it is her manifest wish that her children should reject with firmness not merely such books as are condemned by name, but also those the tone of which is likely to injure faith or morals.

Our present purpose dispenses us from the obligation of entering upon a defense of the legislation, such as we have described it, adopted by the Church in the matter of bad books. Addressing ourselves to Catholics, we have no need to justify the principles on which that legislation is based, for no well-instructed Catholic will think of calling them in question. But herein lies the difficulty, that whereas Catholics readily admit the necessity of stringent rules in matter of such reading as really endangers faith or morals, they are not so easily convinced that in their own proper case such danger exists. Hence, professional men have little or no difficulty in taking as their instructors historians, whose books are colored with anti-Catholic prejudices, and who give the most distorted views of the action of the Church upon the world. Hence, writers on jurisprudence, whose first principles are wholly incompatible with the very charter of the Church's existence, are allowed to form the minds of young Catholic students. In making choice of authors on mental and social philosophy especially, it appears to be quite forgotten that the Church both possesses and exercises the right of judging philosophical systems. The writer of these lines has had an opportunity of witnessing the result of this forgetfulness. He has heard it seriously maintained by young Catholics, otherwise exemplary, that the Church not only ought never to pass judgment upon philosophy, but ought to tolerate the errors of philosophy, leaving it to correct itself; and that philosophy is to be treated of without taking any account of supernatural revelation; and yet these very propositions have been condemned (nn. xi., xiv.) in the Syllabus. Besides, it very generally happens that Catholics are constant readers of some one or other of the periodicals which judge of passing events, or of new books, from a point of view altogether anti-Catholic; and when they find these oracles, day after day, occupied in proclaiming the merits of some new work of science or of fiction, which has reached the dignity of being called the book of the season, they become so eagerly curious to read it as seldom to stop to consider whether they are justified in doing so or not. And thus it happens that, while in theory they rightly admit the force of the obligation which imposes caution in the choice of books, they practically disregard it, not, indeed, through contempt, but because they cannot bring themselves to believe that in their case there is any considerable danger incurred by indiscriminate reading.

This secure confidence in their own invulnerability is the source of most serious evils, and it is a confidence as rash as it is dangerous.

No doubt there are a few minds which have but little to fear from the artifices with which error seeks to recommend itself under the double attraction of specious argument and elegant style. Such minds are remarkable alike for singular vigor and for ripe judgment; thoroughly disciplined to accurate reasoning; rich in large stores of information; grounded in knowledge as well of the object as of the motives of faith; and for whom religion is a living power to control the will, as well as a system of doctrine to enlighten the intellect. Such minds as these will be able to unravel the most intricate sophism, to detect the confusion of ideas, and to correct false statements of fact; while for all the tricks of style under which the poison lies hid they will feel but contempt or disgust. But men blessed with such minds are few indeed, and even these few may not venture with safety on the dangerous voyage through strange seas of thought. The ablest among them have acknowledged that, after reading some pages of works in which error was conveyed with treacherous skill under the most graceful forms, they were conscious of feeling ill at ease, and of a bad impression of an indefinitely unsettling character, which, if not shaken off at once by a vigorous effort, threatened to sap the foundation of their strongest convictions. If these impressions were frequently repeated, as would naturally happen in cases where such books are habitually or often read, the danger of the most alarming consequences is but too apparent.

But the great bulk of readers at present cannot lay claim to the possession of intellectual gifts of a high order. In the first place, their religious knowledge is very limited. It is astonishing to find how ignorant of the teaching of the Catholic Church, on many most important points, is the mass of what is called the reading public. No doubt they are Catholics, and love and cherish their faith; but of the reasonable grounds on which that faith rests—of the solid motives that confirm it—of the harmony and symmetry of its parts, they have but scantiest knowledge. In the next place, they have had little or no training of mind, their understanding is not robust enough to deal with solid matter, nor their judgment disciplined to separate the true from the false. Again, they are incapable of serious mental exertion, and averse from all that imposes the labor of thought. They are mere passive recipients of what they read, surrendering their minds to the action of the thoughts of others, without ever challenging the claims which those others have upon them for the allegiance they are so slavishly ready to yield. Add to this that the human mind, under any circumstances, is more tenacious of an objection than of the reply; more sensitive to a difficulty than to the solution; and that, owing to the peculiar circumstances of this country, the current literature is a very hot-bed of difficulties and objections against the Catholic faith. Every quarter, every month, every fortnight, every week brings out a crop of reviews and magazines which supply millions with matter for reading, and in these periodicals you will find the Church perpetually calumniated, her doctrines and her history falsified, her moderation qualified as irreconcilable antagonism to all that modern progress has won for humanity, her claim to control thought and science misrepresented and derided. You will find religious indifferentism praised to the skies, and the dogmatic principle condemned as tyranny. And whoever makes a careful examination will find underlying all this, and working up through it, an erroneous philosophy which, by its false doctrine of causes, saps the demonstration of that central truth, the existence of God.

Under conditions such as we have described, the results of indiscriminate reading cannot be other than pernicious. The weak must yield to the strong. Generally speaking, the effect of the bad impressions, reiterated again and again, upon the mind of a Catholic who habitually reads, without restraint or antidote, what is called the literature of the day, will be to bring about a divorce between his faith and his reason. He will cling to his faith, but his adherence to it will be the work more of sentiment or of habit than of conviction. And when the fortunes of his life place him in occasions of temptation, when the wild strength of the passions finds no check upon them save that of a creed which is but half believed in, it requires little knowledge of man's heart to foretell the melancholy result.

But whatever we may suppose to be the probable issue of the battle, no one has the right to tempt the dangers that attend the combat. Faith, no doubt, is a gift of God; but God exacts from us for its preservation a faithful correspondence on our part. Who can tell how far he may go without endangering that precious gift? Woe to us if by rash curiosity to know what may be urged against the doctrines of the Church, or by imprudent dallying with difficulties which we are not prepared to meet, we imperil our secure possession of that priceless blessing which ought to be dearer to us than life.

Now, from what we have said, it follows that indiscriminate reading of the books which go to make up the literature of the day, will, if practiced as a habit, infallibly lead to such danger in a greater or less degree.

We are quite prepared, however, to find that not all will agree with us on this point. It will be said that in this age of ours a person of intelligence ought to be familiar with the arguments adduced on both sides of every important question. If not, he will speedily be left behind by the progress of the times, and be unable to keep pace with his fellow-men, who read everything.

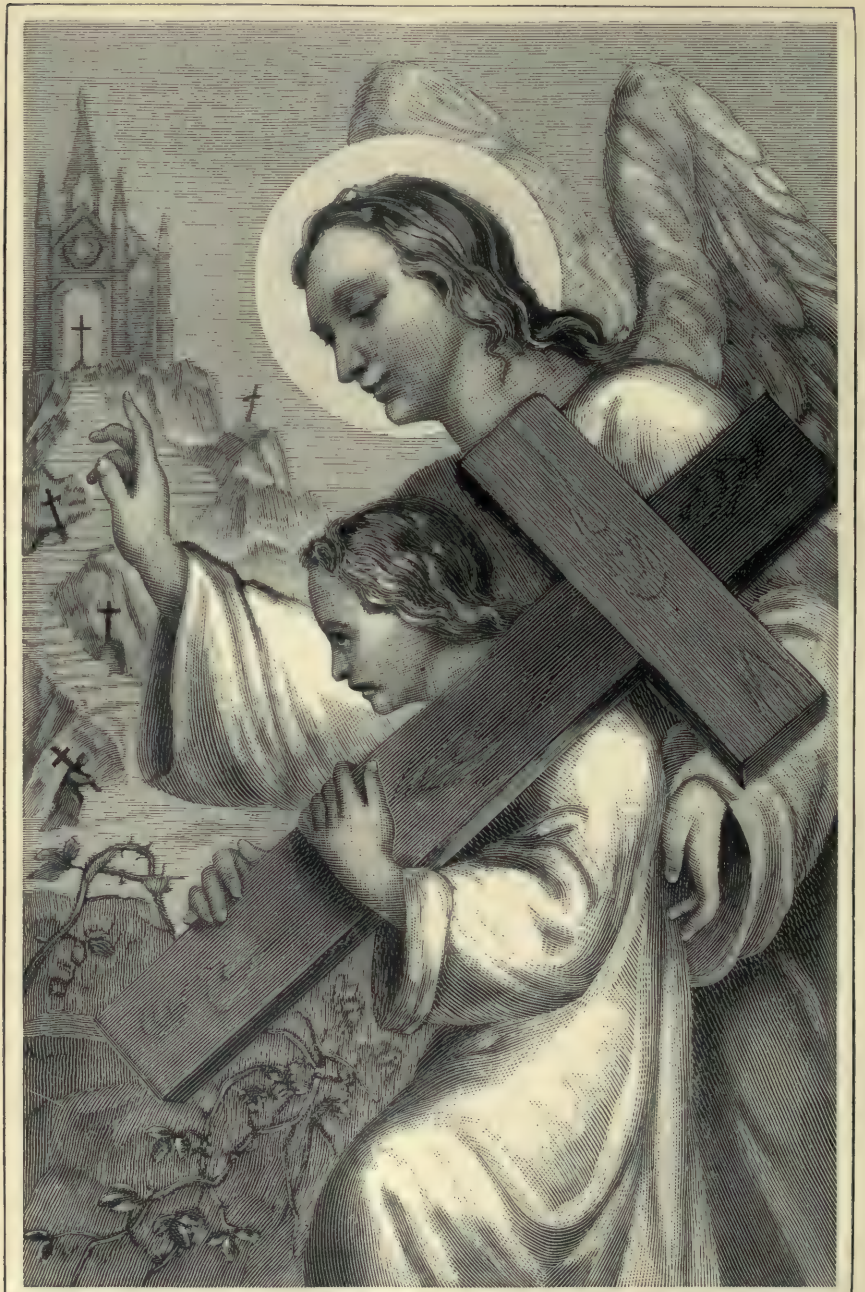
But, we ask, do you really and conscientiously carry out your golden rule of studying the arguments on both sides of the question? In virtue of your rule, you have read, let us suppose, Renan's "Life of Christ," or Barlow's "Eternal Punishment," in order to know what is urged against Catholic doctrine on subjects of such importance. But did you read what the learned have written on the other side? Did you read, for example, the late revered Primate Dixon's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," where the authenticity and veracity of the Bible is proved beyond doubt, and the ground thus cut away from beneath the feet of those unbelieving writers? Or, perhaps, you habitually read some able Protestant periodical which deals in controversy, or occupies itself with comments on the struggle going on at home and abroad between the Church and her enemies. But do you also read the Catholic side of each of the questions under discussion? Do you make it your business to study attentively all the arguments which Catholic theologians have brought to the defense of the truth? If you do (and, as a Catholic, you will naturally begin with Catholic works) you will have little time and less inclination to read the opposite errors. For, besides that, the grace of faith will fill you with joyful confidence in the truth you possess, you will find that Catholic writers are in the habit of giving full answers to all objections. Besides, in such cases, even the material time for such studies would be wanting to you. We fear much, however, that this desire to know both sides of the question in practice becomes little else than an excuse for reading remarkable works written to advocate what is false. And even if you were willing to carry out conscientiously this rule of reading books on both sides the danger attending it would forbid its use, save under exceptional circumstances. To be forever receiving impressions unfavorable to the Church; to be constantly reading false statements of fact concerning her doctrines and her acts; to witness the incessant sneers and derision with which her holiest things are received; to bring one's self to listen to daily charges against her as being in opposition to all that is free and generous in the modern world, and yet not to bear away any injury, is altogether morally impossible. *Gutta cavat lapidem.* It is vain to quote your past experience; how the freshness of your faith has never faded; and how whilst, as you admit, thousands fell around you on the right hand and on the left, the evil came not near unto you. The soul is not always conscious of the wounds she receives in this struggle; it is only when trial and temptation come on, and when she has to exert her best strength to repel them, that she finds to her cost how, like Samson, she has been robbed of her vigor while she slept.

Thus far we have spoken only of dangers to faith; but there is another and universal danger to be feared from indiscriminate reading: we mean dangers to good morals. There are books which, with shameless audacity, describe in plain language the most infamous scenes of vice; there are others which, with greater refinement, but not less malice, paint them half disguised in the most attractive colors. But, in either case, their universal theme is the exaltation of the worst passions of the heart of man at the expense of virtue and modesty and Christian self-denial. There can surely be no doubt but that literature such as this should be abhorred by every one. We cannot neglect, however, to say one word concerning that passion for works of fiction, even though not in themselves objectionable, which has seized upon the world, and which has struck roots far and wide among the young. It must not be thought that we condemn works of imagination as such. The mind has its flower-garden as well as its corn-fields to be cultivated, and the best and holiest have not been indifferent to the charms of literature. What we condemn is the habit of giving one's self up to the reading of books of this class exclusively, or almost to the exclusion of more serious studies. Such a habit exercises the worst effects on the heart and upon the mind. The constant perusal of works of fiction unduly develops the imagination at the expense of the reasoning powers, thus disturbing that order of the faculties which nature has established. Besides, it extinguishes all taste for serious studies, especially for the study of history, and where laborious habits of patient and steady work are thus neglected, the mind loses its vigor, and the whole character, dwarfed by the want of healthy exercise, becomes puerile and feeble. The same disastrous effects, though in a minor degree, are the result of newspaper reading, when carried to the excess for which our age is so remarkable. How many are there, both young and old, whose reading alternates between novels and newspapers, newspapers and novels! And what can be expected from minds fed upon such garbage! The best faculties of the understanding—judgment, attention, memory, comprehension—become so depressed and weakened by this desultory reading of trifles that they are no longer able to brace themselves to any high effort worthy of the rational soul of man.

From what we have said, it is evidently the duty of all to exercise great prudence in the choice of books. Two practical rules of great importance may be laid down to guide us in this matter. First, the necessary should go before the useful, the useful before the amusing. Second, we should deny ourselves all such books as are noxious or dangerous, and we should exercise great restraint on ourselves with regard to such as, though indifferent in themselves, are nevertheless easily abused. We should have moral strength enough to resist the tide of public opinion when it would draw us to read some new book remarkable for its novel theories against faith or sound philosophy, or famous for the enchanting pictures it gives of a life forbidden to Christian souls. Nor should we fail to express, in presence of others, our feelings on such a subject. One quiet display of contempt against the idol of the perverse fashion of the day may be the means of freeing others, especially the young, from a thraldom as dangerous as it is unreasonable.

REVEREND ARTHUR RYAN.

The following Sermons are selections from a ten-years' series delivered by Reverend ARTHUR RYAN, President of St. Patrick's College, Thurles, Ireland.



One Step More for Heaven.

HEAVEN.

"Our conversation is in Heaven."—PHIL. iii. 20.

WHATEVER, brethren, may be the precise meaning of the word "conversation" in this text, it is quite clear that St. Paul would have us think and speak of Heaven, or have, as he says elsewhere, a *relish* for "the things that are above." Now, we cannot think, and should not speak, of things that we do not know something about; nor can we have any relish or desire for the things above, unless we have some notion, and indeed some practical realization, of them. For, according to the old maxim, there can be no desire without some previous knowledge of the thing desired. What, then, do we know of Heaven—the object of our hope—in which, as St. Paul tells us, is our conversation?

How little we know will be the answer readiest to most. The Prophet Isaias, quoted and amplified by St. Paul, has told us, in words familiar to us all, that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." The Apostle, however, qualifies the saying of the Prophet, at least in so far as it applies to the knowledge of Christians; for he adds in the very next verse, "but to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit." The nature and extent of the revelation by creatures we may learn from that wonderful passage of the Epistle to the Romans, in which St. Paul answered the Agnostics of his day, and in which the Fathers of the Vatican Council found the refutation and condemnation of a later and deeper unbelief: "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power, also, and divinity." That is to say, by seeing aright the created and visible things around us in this world, we can come to a knowledge, and to a clear knowledge, of the invisible things of Heaven, and even of their Divine Creator Himself. True, elsewhere the same Apostle, comparing this our earthly knowledge of God and Heaven with the vision enjoyed by the blessed, says: "We see now through a glass, in a dark manner: but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known." These words, however, only more fully explain the meaning of my previous quotations from St. Paul; for they at once tell us the inadequacy, and yet the practical truth of this vision of God in Nature. Observe, brethren, we *see*, though as yet but dimly; we *know*, though as yet but in part. Our sight and knowledge are *clear* for practical purposes here: they are, however, dim and imperfect when compared with the better things to come.

I find in the writings of St. Thomas of Aquin a brief explanation of these words of St. Paul, which will, I think, greatly help us. "The whole creation," he says, "is for us a sort of mirror; because from the order, and goodness, and greatness which are caused by God in creatures we come to a knowledge of the Divine wisdom, and goodness, and excellence." The world we see is, according to St. Thomas, who but explains the figure of St. Paul, a kind of mirror or looking-glass: by looking in we can see, as it were, the reflection of God's face—His Divine character outlined there. And since He is the joy of the saints, and the contemplation of His face the everlasting reward we hope for, we have, in this reflected vision of God, a true image (though *only* an image) of Heaven. Hugh of St. Victor further tells us (and his words are very much to our purpose) that "as in the present life every creature is, as it were, a mirror in which God is seen reflected, so in the life to come God Himself will be the mirror of all creatures, in which they will all be seen more truly than they are seen in themselves." The God of Heaven, then, and our happy home with Him, we may now see mirrored on earth—as far as sin-blurred earth can hold His Divine reflection: and in Heaven we shall see—oh, God grant we may all be there to see!—the things of earth in their perfection and exemplars in Him, their Maker, and therefore, as our holy writer says, more truly than we can see them in themselves. Surely this reflection of Heaven in earth, and of earth in Heaven, should bring the thought of our future home very close to us, and easily within the reach of even the simplest. May God anoint our eyes with eye-salve, that we may see this glory from above resting on this valley of tears, and on the bosom of its troubled waters the image of the tranquil sky.

This, then, is the teaching of St. Paul—no mere poetic fancy, remember, though it *is* poetic—that all the glory of earth, all that wins us by its loveliness, all that fills the eye with the grace of form and color, the ear with melody, the heart with longing, all is, even though we little heed its import, the beauty of God and of His Heaven reflected before our eyes; the melodies of earth are echoes, faint, but still fascinating, of the sweet and wondrous voice of God, and of the canticles before His throne: the stirring of human hearts is the first thrill—dear Lord, may we never forget it!—of the love which will find its rapturous consummation in the blissful union of Heaven. Ah, brethren, I hear you say, how sin has spoiled all this! How it has blurred the mirror, and so defiled its surface, that before we can see the face of God reflected there we must strive hard to wipe away what is impure! Truly, only the clean of heart can see God even as He is reflected here; the holiest have had the most perfect vision on earth, as they have it also in Heaven: the sinner, alas! sees the very beauty of God distorted into foul images of sin. Time was when the reflection was undimmed. Earth was then a Paradise, and God, we read, "walked" therein, so perfectly was the heavenly beauty mirrored in that Eden of delight. But all was disordered, distorted, ruined, in the evil hour of man's fall, and the mirror-earth, though it still shows the image of its Maker, shows it "darkly," so that it is, as the "enigma" of St. Paul means, a matter of guesswork to trace the Divine features amid the confusion and obscuration of sin. The fact remains, however, that from this visible creation, deranged though it is, we can see enough of order and beauty to help us to a knowledge of the invisible Heaven above, to a knowledge clear enough to eye and intellect to be a *working* view, a practical notion, one fit to inform our expectation, and to disenchant us, even while it increases our enchantment, with our place of exile here. Let us scan the frame of things around us, let us look into this mirror of Heaven on earth, that we may understand, as St. Paul would have us, the meaning of this mysterious beauty that so strangely moves us, and see, guessingly it may be, and in part, but still with a clear gain of practical hope and trust, the things God has prepared for them that love Him.

Have you never, dear brethren, thoughtlessly it may have been, or with the feeling that you were excusable in your exaggeration, spoken of some spot of earth, some summer day, some spell of auspicious weather as "*heavenly*"? If so, I tell you now in this holy place that you were right in the word you used, and happy indeed if it so chanced that you realized the meaning of what you said. Earth *is* heavenly at times. In favored spots, at rare intervals, and for all too brief a space, the reflex of Heaven seems, as far as we can bear it, absolutely perfect, leaving us nothing wanting even to our highest and most refined desires. For a while the eye is filled with seeing, and the ear with hearing; we put from us the sad thought that it cannot last. So perfect is the image in the mirror, that it stands well enough for the reality; and this very briefness of the vision is a proof that it is but a visitor on earth: its biding place is elsewhere.

You have found yourself, perchance, upon a summer day, within the sanctuary of some sequestered valley; the tempered sunshine rests on all; on the rain-freshened verdure of the tree above you, and of the grass beneath your feet; on the smiling hills that fold you on every side;

on the sleeping waters of the lake beneath. The air is sweet with the scent of flowers, and cooled by the plashing of the shaded stream; sounds of song are in the sky above, and in the woods and thickets around. Though, indeed, you scarcely note each several charm; for it is the unspeakable harmony of all, and its perfect unison with the chords of your heart within, that you are sensible of as you pant out, in a very rapture of thanksgiving, My God, this is *heavenly!* Yes, it is; and thank Him for such a glimpse into the mirror, when the very smoothness of unfallen nature is upon it, when the peace of Paradise seems restored, and the unclouded smile of its not yet outraged God seems reflected on an earth that bears as yet no curse. Make the most of such hours, brethren, for they will quickly pass: the valley will be storm-swept, the skies darkened, the verdure, the fragrance, the melody—all will soon go. But that is to remind you that what you have seen is an image, and not the reality; it is not to take away the lesson that its beauty has taught you, nor to rob you of the hope it has kindled in your soul. For the invisible Heaven of God is clearly seen from the created world below, being understood through its image in creation; its Maker's eternal power also, and Divine perfections.

Another mirror of Heaven may be found in those brief spans of repose vouchsafed to man even in this land of labor—short rest, it is true, and broken, but nevertheless an instalment and a promise of eternal rest to follow. The week draws to its close: evening has fallen on its latest day: its six suns have set on six days of toil, and, at last, welcome the day of rest! The hand of the weary worker has relaxed, or holds but a few coins on which he looks with pride as the fair wages of his fair week's work. Mind and body are at ease; there is nothing, he says, to trouble or to vex him, and he hails the Lord's Day as if it were a day taken from the Calendar of Heaven. And so it is. For has he not often prayed, perhaps without noticing the real drift of what he said, that God would give the dear ones gone from him, and all the souls departed, "eternal rest"? "Give them, O Lord eternal rest." In the quiet waters of earth the quiet of Heaven is mirrored; and in that workman's rest, and in the rest of every honest toiler with hand or brain, is an image of the blessed and eternal Sabbath, when no man shall work, nor any heart be weary, when every hand that wrought for God shall hold His wage exceeding great.

Home, and the manifold happiness that makes that name a name of sweetness to us all, is it not another mirror of Heaven, a very Paradise on earth? All that endears it—the links with the past, the promises for the future, the hallowed joys that seem in their unfading memories to have a stability not given to aught else of earth, the way in which its sorrows are forgotten in its gladness—all make the happy home below a worthy image of the happier home above. The "many mansions" of the Father's Kingdom are reflected in the tiny mirrors of His children's earthly homes; and the yearning of the exile for the country of his childhood is, were it spiritually recognized, only part of that larger longing planted in the human heart by God—

"Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in Patria."

Again, has it never struck you that if there is a picture of Heaven on earth it is a Catholic church during the progress of some splendid ceremonial? And there is more than the image here—there is the Reality—the Real Presence of Him who is the joy of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the lamp thereof. The Sacramental Veil is hanging before the face of Jesus, else should we enjoy the very happiness of the angels of God who, unseen by us, are ministering around that altar; who, unheard by us, are filling in the meagre harmonies of choir and organ with the rich canticles of Heaven. Still, in what we see and hear there is enough to rejoice us with the thoughts of the Courts above, and of those that worship there. In the venerable ministers we see the ancients whom St. John saw prostrate before the throne: in the white-robed ranks of the sanctuary, the multitude that no man can number, who worship before the Lamb: in the smoke of the incense, the prayers of the saints ascending up before God from the hand of the Angel: in the chanting of human voices, the new canticle that no man can utter: in the ritual of the Church militant, the glory of the Church triumphant. Ah, should we speak lightly of the solemn rites of the Sanctuary, or murmur at their length, if we realized the fact that they are the bright earthly reflex of the pageantry of Heaven?

One more look into the mirror and I have done. God guard us as we look this time, for we shall need His help and the prayers of our gentle Mother Mary to wipe away the foulness that has gathered on the glass. I ask you to look at the love of human hearts on earth, and on its pure and lofty joy, as the image of the love and fruition of God, and its never-ending bliss. Love is the very highest reward of Heaven. It is the perversion of love that is the all-pervading sin of earth: it is the absence of love that is the bitterest torment of hell. The most terrible fall is that from the loftiest station; the foulest corruption is that of the fairest; the rankest decay that of the sweetest flowers. And so, once this peerless gift of Heaven is tainted, the taste thereof is mortal: its very sweetness is death. Still, brethren, is love the best gift that man has to offer to God or man; and our surest way to avoid the terrible sin of perverting it is to recognize in it, as I ask you now to do, the strongest link between Heaven and earth—the brightest reflection below, when free from all that is unworthy, of the pure happiness of the angels and saints above. Indeed, it does not seem to be a denizen of earth at all. For true friendship is the sympathy of *souls*, and is, therefore, in its nature spiritual, passing the understanding of the gross-minded, and being but weakened, and its duration lessened, when it declines to lower levels and to material joys. The human soul is the most perfect image of God on earth, and is recognized as such by the love that, without knowing why, seeks to rest in it, and to win back its God-like love. Find me on earth any creature that more perfectly reflects my Creator than the friend whom I love and reverence, and I will transfer to that creature my heart's affection. And, in speaking thus, the true nobility of human fidelity appears. It is in God that there is no change or shadow of alteration: hence it is of what is most like Him in human love that poets sing when they praise unchanging troth and unswerving hearts. The fickle, roving affections of earth stand thus self-condemned beside the reflected image of Heavenly love and the purity of its unfading beauty.

This is the love that the wise man tells us is as strong as death: this is the love that will last, the only love that can last, through death: it is in this eternal love that we shall claim our own beyond the grave; for it was God's image we so dearly loved in them on earth, and we shall know its perfection better in Heaven when we can compare it with Him face to face. And here is, to my thinking, the answer to those who distress themselves with the thought that some whom they have loved on earth may, alas! be missing from Heaven. No; they may not be there, but they will not be *missing*. All that we truly loved in them will be there: any lower love will have been burned out of our hearts ere we enter Heaven ourselves. We have no right to love on earth anything unloved by God. But show me the sinner *here* whom He does not love far better than the dearest friend can love him. If we love that poor soul in God, we shall find our love again in God, even though its earthly object has elected to remain forever an enemy of God, and of all who are His. For remember the words of Hugh of St. Victor, that as we see God reflected in creatures here, we shall see creatures reflected in God hereafter; nor shall we have any room, in the full and overflowing measure of that loving vision, for anything unworthy of reflection there. Sweet Lord, keep our hearts pure, that no love of ours on earth may be unfit for Heaven, where nothing defiled can enter, but where all that we have *well* loved in creatures we shall know more truly and love more dearly in Thee!

Dear brethren, once more I ask you to remember that these are no mere fancies of the preacher, but the very substance of the Divine revelation to St. Paul, the application to our own lives of the words of the Apostle and of Doctors of the Church. If the hope of Heaven is a practical hope, and one to work upon, and one to energize our work, surely every thought that will bring that hope before our minds, that will make the substance of that hope more vivid, and the realization of that hope more sure, will be a blessed thought, and one to rest on for a lifetime. As I have said, it will disenchant us with earth, even while it adds to its enchantment. For it will ever show this mirror-life to us as in itself, indeed, a vain shadow, unsubstantial, transient, all unworthy of immortal love. But it will also show us in this glass of life the reflex of a world that passeth not, the promise of the great reality, the outlines of the better land; and we shall love creation with a higher and a truer love than ever, as a friend loves the picture of his friend; we shall know its beauty, and study its harmonies, as the reflected picture of our home with God in Heaven, and as echoes of celestial song. Loving thus what we have, we shall long for more; contemplating the dim vision, we shall yearn to see face to face; delighting our eyes with the radiance of earth, our ears with its music, our hearts with its love, we shall not rest in these, but seek to be fully satisfied only when His glory shall appear; confessing, even amid the brightest, and sweetest, and dearest of earth, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

GOOD AND EVIL.

> "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."—LUKE xvi. 25.

THE words of my text, brethren, point to a fact which has at all times been a trial and a perplexity to man. For Jesus, in the parable of the Rich Man, tells us how Abraham, speaking to that lost soul, says: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things." Now, this is our perplexing trial—the evil livers do, before our eyes, receive the good things of life—the wealth, and comfort, and ease of mind and body; and likewise the good and patient servants of God receive the evil things of life—poverty, sickness, distress. Dives still lives amongst us, selfish and hard-handed as of old, and nevertheless clothed in purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day, and at the end borne in splendor to the grave; while Lazarus is still the outcast, despite his long-suffering and resignation to his lot; still refused the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table; still a beggar in life, and laid, at the end, in a pauper's grave. Or rather, as if to perplex us more, there is no such exact division of evil to the good, and good to the evil—this might be its own explanation; but there is what seems an absolute want of all order or rule in the division of goods and ills; the good livers being here in good and there in evil plight, the evil doers being now rewarded and now punished. It is a confusion that we seek in vain to arrange to our satisfaction. Our temptation is to give up all idea of there being a just Providence at all, and to set down this medley to the haphazard action of fate, or "luck," as we call it. And all the stronger does this temptation grow when in our own lives we see that the same confusion exists—our best and holiest years being often most full of trials, and our unfaithful and ungenerous, and even sinful years being, perhaps, our happiest and most prosperous.

I appeal to you, dear friends, has not this been your own sore trial? Has not the Tempter shown you, at times, the kingdoms of the world, and the lives of men, and the stretch of your own years, and said: "See this confusion of goods and ills; see these wicked lifted up, these holy ones cast down; see your own sinfulness prospering and your justice come to nought; fall down and adore Fortune, Fate, Luck, or whatever you choose to call *me*, but cease to believe in a Providence that is nowhere evident on earth, or in a God that gives His good gifts and His punishments without justice, heedless of merit or demerit"? I say, has not the Tempter sometimes whispered to you thus *his* horrible interpretation of the difficulty? and ought you not to listen gladly now to God's interpretation, to the answer His Holy Spirit has given to this perplexing question? Let us then, for a few moments, strive to understand the answer of the Scripture, that we may strengthen our faith against all such attacks, and out of the very reasons of the Enemy make firm our loving trust in the Providence of God.

Dear brethren, you may have remarked that there are many things in the material world around us that appear to be in confusion and without any order or arrangement from some points of view, while from other positions they are seen to be symmetrical and even beautiful. You may have been in a wood, perhaps, where, when you are walking in one direction, the trees are irregular, and planted, it would seem, without any reference to one another; but turn right or left and you will see that they stand in absolutely perfect lines, with long straight alleys between them, down which the eye ranges with delight. Or look at that very stained glass window there. Seen from outside, what could be more confused, and even unsightly, than the lines upon the glass? But seen from this point all is harmonious in form and color. So is it with the confusion we have been wondering at in the moral world—the confusion in the distribution of good and evil. Looked at from man's standpoint, there seems no unravelling its perplexities, it shows no sign of care or Providence; but seen at the point God sees it from—seen from the point where His Holy Spirit, not the Tempter, shows it to us, the confusion and perplexity vanish, and all is order and law, and beauty and love. That point, brethren, where out of seeming chance and injustice Providence and justice appear, is the Day of Judgment, when God will justify His ways to man. Then the good shall be finally separated from the evil, and the sheep from the goats; then all the good shall be rewarded with good unmixed with ill, and the wicked punished with ill unmixed with good; and the confusion and perplexity of this world's fates and fortunes shall then be resolved finally and simply into Heaven and Hell. This is what the Wise Man means when he writes: "God will judge the wicked man and the just man: then will be the time for everything." As much as to say, this is not the time to look at things, nor this the place. Now, and here, everything looks disordered; but wait till the Judgment-day, and then will be the time to see things aright, as God sees them, and as He wishes us to see them forever; "*then*," but not till then, "will be the time for everything."

It is, dear brethren, a thought familiar to you that this life is but a time of passage, of travelling on, unrestingly, toward a place of final biding. We read of those who in the rigors of northern latitudes are tempted to rest on their way through the snow and frost, although they know that to rest thus is certain death. And we feel, too, the terrible strength of our temptation in the journey of life to sit down and take our ease here, even at the peril of our eternal salvation. Well, now, we see that God has Himself made it hard for us so to rest. Everything around us is most unlike what we should expect in a place of rest. There is confusion and disorder, and pain and very great uncertainty. There is on earth no place where the soul can say to itself, Here take thy rest. For the sunny spots, like the shifting gleams on the mountain-side, move away just as we have reached them; and even if we enjoy their brightness and warmth for a moment, we have the sad certainty that the shadow of the cloud must quickly be upon us. I say God has, in allowing this confused and ever-varying distribution of the lights and shadows of life, almost obliged us to look from this to some other state where our longing for order and rest shall be satisfied. He has refused us a resting-place, that He may almost force us to push on to the "lasting city," where we shall rest in peace, or, as the Psalmist puts it, "where the saints shall be joyful in their beds." See, brethren, how the Providence of God appears exactly where we least expected to see it manifest—in that very confusion and disorder of good and evil which was our trial, and which tempted us to disbelieve in any Divine government at all. We see, now, the hand of God in this economy of confusion, and recognize that the true unriddling of the universe is in the fact that God's day is yet to come, and that we must wait and watch for its coming. For then, and not till then, "His fan shall be in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and gather His wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." Then, and not till then, shall He separate both the just from the unjust, and the good things of His bounty from the evil things of His justice; and He shall then say to those on His right hand: Come, ye blessed, to the kingdom of joy unmixed with sorrow; and to those upon His left: Depart, ye accursed, to the place of unmitigated pain.

Dear brethren, I have said that we are forced, in a way, to look for some such final order and discrimination. What we see around us obliges us to this. Do we not see that this universe, amid apparent confusion, is, even in its minutest action, governed by law and beautified by order? Study it, in any of its parts, and you at once come to law; know it, and you at once come to love it, and this despite much that seems at first disordered and unlovely. Look up to the skies at night, and remember that the confusion of those myriad stars unravels itself to the astronomer, and resolves itself into most perfect law. Look at the tiniest flower of the field. You have, perhaps, seen it a thousand times; but now take it up, examine its little leaves, its exquisite delicacy of form and color, and say do you not now love a beauty that you thought commonplace before? Listen to that lark singing up there in the sky. You have been hearing that song, perhaps, for hours; but *listen* to it now. Do you find no joy, unfelt before, in that outpouring melody—some meaning lying beneath what at first seemed meaningless? I say, brethren, that it is impossible to go *into* any part of nature and not to find law and beauty there waiting for us. And can it be that man, God's most perfect work, is the sole exception? Can it be that in his lot alone there is no revelation of its law, but only final confusion? no unfolding of its beauty, but only utter shapelessness? no interpretation of its meaning, but only a riddle to the end? No, surely not; this would be to put man lower than all creation, whereas he is higher. There is, indeed, no explanation of our chequered lot given to us here; but let us wait—we shall know it *there*. Thus let us answer the Tempter, and turn this vision of confusion against him who forces it upon our sight, by making it a vision of hope, a reminder that, like the seeming medley of the Universe, the disorder of man's lot will disappear before a wider knowledge and a purer love. "I have said in my heart: God will judge the wicked man, and the just man, and *then* will be the time for everything."

And, dear brethren, how foolish it is for us to think that we can, in our short space of a few years, take in the full measure of God's designs. He dwells in Eternity; He works in Eternity; His designs are from Eternity to Eternity; and man, in his moment of time, thinks he ought to see and understand all! Would even human common sense brook such folly? Would a legislator allow his law code to be judged by one short clause? Would a painter allow his picture to be condemned before it was half completed? Surely, then, it were wise of us to wait until we know God's ordinance as a whole before we presume to criticise it, and until we see the completion of His design before we pronounce upon its proportion or its beauty. Let us, as St. Augustine says, not narrow God's judgments into the little circuit of our experience, but rather expand ourselves into His eternity, where alone His full justice and beauty can be seen. And let us be further mindful that it is the privilege of the powerful to take their time. Precipitation is a sign of weakness. The weak seize upon the day, the hour, the moment, which is favorable: missing that, they lose their only chance of success. And so, as that precious moment hurries by, they must hurry to catch it. But to the strong man any moment, be it soon or late, is propitious. He can therefore wait, and bide his time in perfect independence. Far more truly, then, can it be said of the Almighty that He need not hurry, that He can afford to wait. His day will come when He chooses: we cannot hurry it by our impatience. And His day will be the day of judgment, the day of justice, of final reward, and of final punishment.

We know, moreover, brethren, that not only are the goods and ills of life distributed in seemingly haphazard confusion among the faithful and the unfaithful children of men, but they are also mixed in their nature; nothing, save sin, being absolutely ill, and nothing, save the will of God, being absolutely good. Sickness, and sorrow, and death may be converted by patience and resignation from evils into blessings; while health, and life, and prosperity may, by an ill use of them, become very real and very terrible evils. But in the end the day will come when good things shall be given to men which no ill use can turn to evil, and woes which no patience can alleviate or turn from being utterly and eternally evil. Of these three states the Psalmist sings: "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup of strong wine, full of mixture; but the dregs thereof are not emptied: all the sinners of the earth shall drink." Here, in the cup which God pours out to man, the Royal Prophet shows us there are three kinds of wine—the pure and strong (*merum*), the mixed (*mixtum*), and the dregs (*faex*). The pure wine is the wine of gladness without sorrow which He will pour out for His Saints in Heaven; the dregs He will give in bitterness unmixed, and all the sinners of the earth shall drink. The mixed—wherein the wine of gladness and the bitter dregs of sorrow are mingled together—is the draught He presents to all, saints and sinners, in this life. Let us, then, when we taste in its sweetness the bitterness of its dregs, remember that the pure wine is yet to be presented to us, if we be faithful, and the dregs, if we be unfaithful. And let us remember, too, that we have no right to expect unmixed joy here; that such belongs to a future day; and, moreover, that no evil is given to us here by God but He has tempered it with good, and given us the power to taste that sweetness even in our bitterest affliction.

Surely, brethren, thoughts such as these should go far toward removing the temptation of the Evil One to doubt of the Providence of God. Surely, from the point to which the Holy Spirit has led us, we can see an order in the disorder of life, and in its confusion the evidence of a great and eternal plan. And, O sinner, think not any longer to find a guilty comfort in the fact that your fellow-sinners still go free and walk in pleasant ways. Be rather all the more terrified at this, now that it reminds you of the day to come, the day of final separation, and of justice without mercy.

Now, what is the practical outcome of such thoughts? You know we must not be mere philosophers: we must be practical Christians. Philosophers speculate and argue and lay down maxims and establish theories; but Christians seek to do, not merely to think, what is right. Philosophers may hold wise opinions, but Christians do wise actions. For it is not men's views that will be judged, but men's works. And so let us come to a practical conclusion. And the first very practical outcome of our contemplation of the Providence of God is this: that we can now afford to despise everything that ends with time, and that we now value only what lasts on into eternity. We have now no real hope or fear, except for what may save or ruin us on the Judgment-day.

For see how lightly we ought to think of those goods of earth, which are of so little value that the wicked share them with the just. Since God gives them indifferently to His friends and to His enemies, surely He can lay little store by them. How rightly indignant, then, He will be if we value them as much as His precious gifts to come, which are reserved for the just alone; if we mistake, as St. Augustine says, the solace of the captives for the joy of the children. And the same holy doctor reminds us that God has given to the wicked the riches and honors of this life, lest these should be overvalued by the just.

And only think for a moment. Think of the chosen people of God, the cherished people of the Jews. Look at the map of the world: see the little corner of Asia into which they were hemmed; while the Pagan Empires of the East and West held the rest of the known world. See our own poor, faithful land of Ireland: the chosen people of the Christian Church are in a little remote island washed by a lonely sea; their history is one of short glories and long trials; their name is a name of pity to the world. And proud, imperial peoples, whose hands are grasping, whose hearts are corrupt, whose faith is broken, are victorious in every clime, prosperous, educated, wealthy, and in honor. Ah, how empty, then, is all that prosperity: how little God must value it when it is thus He gives it! How little we shall long for it, or pine over its loss, if only we hold it at the price He has set on it; and surely He knows best.

And you, dear brethren, to whom I love most to speak, you who are the special joy and crown of a Christian priest; you faithful poor, to you this lesson comes home, oh, how touchingly! How sad it were for you to lay great store by riches that you can never possess, or even by the comfort and modest independence that your hard lot prevents many of you from ever hoping to attain. How sad your humble homes would be if you were to think that real happiness dwelt only under lofty roofs, and within shapely walls, but never in the thatched cabins of the poor. Surely for you these are good tidings of great joy, that God, who knows the true value of things, ranks poverty before wealth, and has given, in this life, the lowly lot mostly to those whom He has elected for His own, and the high stations of the world very often to those who are His enemies. Try, my dear friends, to see life thus, and you will not sadden your already sad estate by fruitless longing for what you will never have—for what, if you had it, would not make you truly happy. In your Father's Kingdom there are many mansions; into those mansions from out your huts of clay you will gladly enter, provided only that you set your hearts there, while you are suffering here. I do not ask you to put from you that longing for riches and rest so natural to the heart of man, and planted there by God. But, with the Apostle, I ask you to turn that longing to *true* riches, not false ones; to true and lasting homes, not crumbling ones of earth; to a rest that will know no disturbance, and not to the troubled and spectre-haunted repose of sinners in this world.

But, brethren, the lesson is for all—for rich and poor. For the poor, as we have seen, that they should not think too much of the evils that oppress them, or of the goods they are deprived of; for the rich, that, accepting thankfully from God the bounties of His hand, they should not set their hearts upon them, seeing that God gives them to those who are His enemies, and to whom He owes, even now, His direst vengeance. Riches, which make this life seem so happy at times, have their own distress and difficulty. If taken at more than their proper value, if looked at as *real* goods, as an end in life, as a final and supreme satisfaction, they become the heaviest of God's curses, and the most awful of His punishments here on earth, since they render penance so hard, and shut out with their deceptive veil the terrors of Eternity. *Look to the end*, then: at the gate of Eternity the rich and the poor, the strong and the ailing, the prosperous and the broken, will shortly (oh, how shortly!) meet. What the past has been in regard to the goods and ills of life will matter little then and there; but it will be of awful moment what the past has to show of resignation to God's appointments, of conformity with God's will, of longing and striving for this—God's day. "Then will be the time for everything"—for everything that seemed good and pleasant, for everything that seemed evil and grievous. For then God will judge the just and the unjust, not according to their happiness or misery, but according to their works; and many that received good things in this life shall then enter into torments, and many that received evil things in this life shall enter into comfort and rest.

ABSTINENCE.

(QUINQUAGESIMA.)

"Every one that striveth for the mastery abstaineth from all things."—1 COR. ix. 25.

IT seems, brethren, that these words which I have chosen for my text have a very special significance for us to-day. For it is my duty to address you, who so really and truly abstain that you are formed into a Society of Abstinence, of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks; and beyond your ranks, my words must go out to those who with you and with all the children of Holy Church are about to enter on the great season of abstinence—of abstinence from certain kinds and quantities of food—the abstinence of Lent. I have no fear, then, that in speaking to members of this Society my words may fall short of those who are not members; for my text points to an abstinence which belongs to no section of Christians, but to all who strive for the Christian's incorruptible crown: for "*every one*"—St. Paul makes no exception—"that striveth for the mastery, abstaineth"; and mark, not from certain drinks, or certain food, but "*from all things*"—that is, from all that can interfere with his success in the struggle. Let us, then, to-day consider this matter of abstinence in its widest signification, as a matter touching all Christians, and preached by the Apostle to all.

We are met at the outset by those who ask: Why should there be any abstinence at all from innocent things? Surely it is enough to abstain from what is bad: for instance, from excess in drinking, or, for the matter of that, from excess in eating. But is there not a happy medium—the safe road of moderation? Let us be moderate, by all means; but why ask us to abstain? Abstinence is not moderation; total abstinence from intoxicants is an extreme course, not a moderate one; and so is total abstinence from flesh meat. It is an extreme measure to stop all meat on Friday, or on certain days in Lent, or on every day in Lent, as was the case before a dispensation was given for certain days. Does not all this—so say the apostles of moderation—run counter to the common sense of mankind, which ever points to the wisdom of a middle course?

Our answer, brethren, is contained in the words of my text. We are "striving for the mastery" in a struggle—a struggle with a powerful enemy, where success will win for us an everlasting crown, and where defeat means everlasting perdition. In such a struggle who would advise moderation? The joys of heaven, the pains of hell, are not *moderate*. No, nor should our striving to gain the one and avoid the other be moderate either. That is why Jesus has said: "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent (not the moderate) bear it away." The foes with whom we strive, and who would, if they could, violently tear from us that crown and that Kingdom, are not given to moderation. They may preach it to us, but they do not practice it. We must meet violence by violence; and since we have to fight, we must choose those weapons which are strong enough to stand and to prevail against our assailants. Now, our body is one of our chief foes. It is the body that damns most of the souls that are damned. The body has its allies in the World and the Devil, but it is itself the great power we have to fight. You know how often St. Paul tells us of this miserable fact, that we bear with us a body of death—a body that is in lifelong struggle with the soul, striving for the mastery, striving to make the soul fall, and then to keep it down. "I see a law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And again: "The Wisdom of the flesh is Death; but the Wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace. If you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."

There is the struggle we have each of us in hand—it is a matter of life and death, of eternal life or eternal death. Who then, believing this, will counsel any but the most vigorous striving, the most far-seeing tactics, the utmost courage and self-sacrificing devotion to the cause? What less, in such a strife, would gain the mastery?

One great means, you know, brethren, of reducing an enemy in war is cutting off his supplies. You may have heard of great and perilous efforts made to prevent provision trains from reaching the hostile lines. Some of the most famous battles in history have been fought between those who attacked and those who defended the wagons that bore food to the hungry soldiers. You have heard of cities reduced to surrender by blockade alone—the food supply running short. Well, in the great fight between the Flesh and the Spirit the same tactics are pursued. The body would strive to cut off supplies, to starve the soul into a surrender. And so the body cuts short the prayers that bring grace to the soul. The body will cry for its extra sleep in the morning; and then will be urgent in its haste to work, or to exercise, or to food; and so morning prayers and the graces they bring are cut off. Evening comes, and the body cries for sleep. Prayers at night are too long: the Rosary is made only a succession of broken sleeps, and finally is omitted altogether. Night prayers are thus reduced to a mere form; the poor soul will soon be starved out at this rate: the body is succeeding well in cutting off the supplies. And above all, Mass and the Sacraments are the objects of attack. The day is too fine to go to confession, or it is too wet, too hot, or too cold. The morning's fast is too much; so Holy Communion is put off. And so on. You know these tactics of the Flesh and these promptings of the Devil only too well. It is all to cut off the supplies of grace to the soul, and thus to force it to surrender. For "the Wisdom of the flesh is Death." The body is striving to make the soul a total abstainer from prayer and all that can bring grace and strength; striving to conquer for Hell by means of this fatal spiritual abstinence.

But, dear brethren, let me use a homely phrase, and say that two can play at that game. If the body tries with such fatal success to cut off supplies from the soul, why should not the soul cut off supplies from the body? If the body would enforce abstinence, and even total abstinence, from spiritual food, why should not the soul enforce a like abstinence from corporal food? What is fair to the one combatant is fair to the other; and what is so powerful in behalf of the Flesh will surely be as powerful in behalf of the Spirit. That such is the case is sufficiently proved by St. Paul's words: "If by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the Flesh, you shall live." And such is the teaching of the soul's great ally in this struggle—the Church of God. For as the Flesh is helped by the Devil and the World, so is the Spirit by the Angels and Saints, and by Holy Church. The Church has therefore fixed certain times for warring against the Flesh by the arms of abstinence. There are seasons when there is, so to speak, a grand attack made upon the supplies of the enemy; when all Catholics join publicly in compelling their bodies to abstain from the food at other times permitted to them, and when what was before left to each individual is enforced under the penalty of grievous sin. Such a time is the time of Lent, on which we are about to enter: a time when the Flesh is harassed by the Spirit, when the body is punished and weakened and brought into subjection by the soul: a time when each faithful Catholic can say, with the Apostle, "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection."

And as there are special times when all the soldiers of the Church, unless released by dispensation, are bound to this warfare of Abstinence, so there are special bodies of her great army bound at all times to carry on these tactics. As in the armies of nations there are certain regiments trained in the use of certain arms, and provided with these arms principally—some with cannon, some with rifles, some with swords or lances, and some with mattocks and axes for clearing a path for the rest, so in God's army the Church has assigned to certain orders certain arms: to one the arm of extraordinary prayer, to others extraordinary fasting and abstinence, to others extraordinary works of mercy, and so on. Mark, the rest of men are not thereby freed from the duty of *ordinary* prayer and penance and charity; but to those chosen bodies the practice of these virtues is assigned in a special and extraordinary way. Thus, we know, there are religious orders given entirely to contemplation within their strict inclosures; and there are other orders whose members are total abstainers from flesh meat, who rise in the mid-hours of night to watch and pray and carry on the warfare while others rest. And there is here gathered together in this church to day yet another band of the soldiers of the Cross—those who have pledged their loyal word to God to abstain totally from all intoxicating drink. Thus we have in the Church that abstinence from all things of which St. Paul speaks: that general attack, in one way or another, upon the supplies of this body of death against which we are obliged to wage unceasing war, striving for the mastery.

But besides this public warfare—this abstinence of certain stated times, and of certain organized bodies within the Church—there is the private and particular warfare which each soul must wage against his own body. That struggle for the mastery is of all seasons, and of all sorts and conditions. For the very life of man is, as Job declares, a warfare; and what is life but the union of body and soul, the grappling together of the Flesh and the Spirit in a long, unceasing struggle? Brethren, have you ever really understood this? Have you ever truly taken in the meaning of St. Paul's words when, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he told you that the body and soul of man are deadly enemies to each other; that the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit; and that, unless this body of flesh be chastised and kept under, it will murder the soul and drag it down to hell? Very different is the doctrine of the world. There, the body is everything: the body is fed and pampered, its every sense supplied with luxury; delicacies are spread for it to taste, sweet sounds for it to hear, fragrant perfumes are sprinkled over it, fair sights displayed before it; it is clad in the softest raiment, and sumptuously housed; all pain is kept as far as may be from it, and the thought of its death is hidden away. And why is this? Because the world treats this body of death as though it were a friend and not an enemy. The world denies the fact of the great death-struggle between the body and the soul, and treats the words of St. Paul as though they were a worn-out superstition. But let us not make so fearful a mistake. Let us lay to heart the truth which we learned in our catechisms: that we are very much inclined to evil, that if we give up the struggle against this strong inclination all is over with us. The enemy never gives up. From childhood to old age the body of death is striving for the mastery, now in one way, now in another; now by lust, now by anger or hate; now by sloth, now by covetousness—always striving. With such a foe can there be ever truce? No, never, till the grip of the combatants shall relax in death. The Christian soul must struggle on, chastising, cutting off the supplies by abstinence, in the morning of life, and in the evening; for a victory might be snatched even in the shadows of the last hour. Ah, no wonder that he who realized this never-ceasing strife—no wonder that, while others clung to life, St. Paul should cry out—"Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" No wonder he should long for the time to come when the soul at last should shake itself free from the body—no wonder he should "desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."

Brethren, look at Jesus. See how He treated His body. In Him there was indeed no struggle. His holy body and soul were both of God. Nor could there be between them any struggle, for in neither of them could there be any sin. And yet, that He might be with us, our stay and comfort in our weary struggle, He chastised His innocent body: He gave His back to the scourge, and His head to the thorns, His face to the spittle, and His hands and feet to nails. Let us, when our struggle seems too hard, and when our spirit seems to waver, let us look at Him, and we shall be strong. It was for us, to encourage each soul to strive for the mastery, that He suffered these things; and it will give our poor penance and abstinence a wondrous power if only we unite them to those sufferings of Jesus on the Cross. Let us all, then, resolve to carry on the struggle manfully. Let us enter on the abstinence of Lent, understanding what that abstinence means, why it has been ordered us, and what it may do for us. And even when Lent is over, we must remember that the struggle between the body and the soul will not have ceased, nor therefore the necessity that every one that striveth for the mastery should still abstain from all things.

And you, especially, to whom I am so strongly bound, belonging as I do to the same band of God's army—the band of Total Abstainers from intoxicating drinks—remember that in your loyal fidelity to your pledge lies your hope of conquering your bodies of death and winning the final victory. Dear friends, you may be heroes in the struggle. You are chosen ones of God. You have the blessing of the Church upon your abstinence. Do not waver. If you feel tempted, look up to your standard: look at the Cross. Hear your Master, in His dying accents, bidding you to be true. "*I thirst!*" He cries; "*I am an abstainer in death!*"

And if there are any here who, moved by that cry from the Cross, wish to imitate Jesus in His thirst, wish to bring comfort to His breaking Heart, to win a victory over their bodies of death, let them this very day join this band of Total Abstinence, and range themselves under the standard of Jesus thirsting on the Cross. Do you who have already joined renew your pledge at the feet of Jesus crucified, and do so as often as you look at the Crucifix there before you, or pass by that standing before this church. If you do that, there is little fear that, with His cry, "*I thirst!*" in your ears, you will ever break your pledge or desert His side.

Dear friends, do not let the length of this life-struggle dishearten you. As surely as Lent passes into Easter, so surely will the strife between the Flesh and the Spirit, between your body and your soul, and all the penance, and abstinence, and weariness of that strife, end in death. If you shall have so striven, so abstained, as to have gained the mastery, your end will be peace and rest. The conquered body shall be laid into its grave, for it is a body of death. But in its ashes shall remain a seed that is not of death; and the day shall come when, in reward for its abstinence and chastisement, suffered in the days of its struggle here, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption; and this mortal shall put on immortality," and in your flesh you shall see God.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

(HOLY THURSDAY.)

"And I looked: and behold . . . a Lamb, standing as it were slain."—APOC. v. 6.

THE devout Catholic, dear brethren, will be ever anxious, on feasts such as this, to place himself, both in thought and feeling, in harmony with the spirit of the Church. It is natural, between Son and Mother, that there should be the same days of joy, the same days of sorrow. If as children, then, we look inquiringly into our Mother's face, and listen to the tones of her voice, on this Holy Thursday, seeking to know that we may share her spirit, we shall be at once arrested by the strange contrast between the joy and the sorrow that unite in her ceremonies and in her words to-day. In the Matins and Lauds of this feast, which we sang last night, no sound of joy was heard; only the sad plaint of the Prophet's lamentation, the first wail of the sorrowing Church over the Passion of her Spouse. This morning, however, all was changed. The pealing organ, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Pange Linguâ*, and the grand procession, the white vestments, the altar decked with flowers, and all the thrilling gladness of Catholic festivity, seemed to bid our hearts rejoice, and have done with grief. But that joy has ended now: the day that opened so brightly is closing sadly; and again we have been listening to our Mother's voice, "mourning for Him whom we have pierced, as one mourneth for an only son; sorrow-stricken, as is one who sorrows over the first-born."

This twofold rite speaks of a twofold mystery; tells us that this Holy Thursday is doubly holy; holy with the sanctity both of sorrow and of joy; sadly holy, because it is the eve of Good Friday, with something of Calvary's gloom upon it; gladly holy, because it is the Feast of the Last Supper, the first Mass, and on it the gleam from a thousand radiant altars. It is, thus, the feast of Sacrifice; of the twofold Sacrifice of the New Law: of the Sacrifice once offered in blood on Calvary, and of that unbloody Sacrifice, offered through every succeeding age, in countless Christian sanctuaries. There is a world of theology—not hard or dry, but full of sweetness and of winning truth—in this union of the Cross and the Christian altar; in this offering of the first Mass at the entrance, as it were, of the Garden of Gethsemani; in this blending of the tones of grief and jubilee on Holy Thursday. It is a theology that teaches us that there never has been a Mass offered in any age or in any place, which has not been as closely bound up with the Passion of Jesus, as was the first Mass, which He offered "the day before He suffered." The aspect of the Mass most fitted, therefore, for our loving contemplation to-night is that aspect which looks to Calvary. The Mass, then, as a Sacrifice, unbloody, but commemorative of the Great Sacrifice in blood; real itself at every altar, and at the same time typical of the past oblation on the Cross: the Mass, full itself of power and grace, yet applying merits, not its own, of a complete Redemption; strong to win love and devotion by its own beauty, yet turning that love and devotion, when won, to Jesus Crucified: that is what the Church asks us to contemplete to-day. Let us consider, then, what is the nature of a Sacrifice, approaching the subject not by way of mere theological inquiry, but rather seeking with simple hearts to know better, that we may love better, that wondrous mystery in our midst—the Sacrifice of the Mass.

God gives man his being, and places him upon the earth, with a sovereignty over all the other works of creation. "*Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus.*" ("Thou hast put all things beneath his feet.") At man's command is all the visible universe, the outcome of countless ages of preparation for his day. He looks out upon the world, and sees there a beauty and harmony that his eye alone can delight in; he gazes into the depths of the starry night, and within him are mysterious sympathies, spanning that all but infinite space, and seeming to draw those spheres within his grasp. The animal life of nature, with its strength and its ferocity, its instinct and its cunning, is ruled by his intelligence. And that intelligence itself—how wonderful its power—bringing into the unity of a single mind all that beauty, all that law, all that vastness, all that life!

Such is man's royalty. He stands the king of all creation. But greater power is in him than mere kingship. He cannot only look down, but he can also look up. He alone of all around him has an immortal, reasonable soul, a communion with the hidden spiritual world, the power of speech with God, that makes him more than king of the universe, inasmuch as it makes him its Priest, and that gives to him alone the mind and the voice that can offer at the Creator's throne the homage of Creation.

How shall this offering be made? How shall man acquit himself of this awful, priestly trust? What shall he give in his own name, and in the name of the universe he represents, to be a token to the Great God of his homage and dependence? He finds one gift, my brethren, and it seems the fairest thing God ever gave, the one that best of all can embrace and represent the worth and beauty of Creation; the one that man himself holds dearer far than all—his life. A splendid gift indeed! A wondrous homage! A human life. The mysterious force, that not only joins the soul and body and knits them into strictest fellowship, but further joins with its hidden link that soul and body, that living individual man, with all that lies below him and beyond him in the world of sense. For it is life that enables the eye to rest, and the spirit to rejoice in every grace of sea and shore, of rugged hill and fruitful plain, in the burning heavens at dawn and sundown, in the vastness of the glittering ocean, in the tender promise-blossoms of the early Spring. It is life that wakes the ear to trills of song from wood and thicket, to the measured plash of the ocean wave, or to that subtler harmony that spells so wondrously the soul of man. It is life that makes the heaving chest inhale through mouth and nostril the keen winter air, or the mild, scent-laden breath of summer. It is life that in fulness and in health makes all nature glad to the soul of man: that even in sickness and in pain is still clung to and hugged, its boon held greater than its cost. Take life away and all the beauty of earth and sky and sea finds no reflection in the dull and glassy eye; the woodland song and the harmonious chord find no vibrating sympathy in the cold, unheeding ear; the breeze sweeps by, balmy or bracing, but cannot swell the breathless nostril, nor raise the sunken chest. Take life away, and high hope, boundless sympathy, the kinship with Creation—all is at an end; "this sensible warm motion has become a kneaded clod."

Such is the human life, such the gift that man holds worthy to offer to his God in token of his dependence on that Divine bounty for every good within him and without; in thanksgiving for the fact of his existence, for the power given him, above all creatures, to praise and love his Maker. This owing of the human life as homage to God is the great spirit of Sacrifice, and man, whom God created as Nature's Priest, now offers himself as Nature's Victim. But alas! man sinned; and at his fall there rose from all the universe a mightier cry for Sacrifice, no longer as homage alone, but now also as propitiation, to appease an angry God. That cry was answered by the rejection of man's Sacrifice; for as priest and victim he was foul with the blot of sin, stained, and fallen before his Maker. Poor man! Stained and fallen man! Still Priest, with the urgency of a double sacrificial debt of homage and propitiation, and with no victim to offer but one rejected by his God; no altar, but one pulluted by his sin! Of what avail is it for him to seek in lower lives a substitute for his own grand, fallen life? and in the innocence of soulless beasts a reparation for the crimes of his intelligence? Can those rivers of less noble blood flowing from the altars of Abel, of Abraham, of

Aaron, satisfy for man's rebellion? No, cries the Apostle, "It is impossible that by the blood of oxen and of goats sins should be remitted. Wherefore, when He cometh into this world, He saith, Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a Body thou hast fitted to ME. Holocausts for sin did not please thee, then said I, behold I COME."

Yes, the Eternal Word, the Only-begotten Son of God, took flesh, that in it He might pay the debt of homage and expiation that was owed by the sinful flesh of man. God became man, and lived a human life, that in man's body He might make of that human life a sacrifice acceptable as homage, sufficient as reparation. It is as man that Jesus is Priest: it is as man that Jesus is Victim. When to-morrow we gaze upon the Sacrifice on Calvary, we shall see upon the cross a human form. Those eyes there dimmed in death have wept with human sympathy over human sorrows. Upon that breast there yielding up its breath has rested the disciple whom the Sufferer loved. Those hands, pierced and fixed on high, have known the warm pressure of a mother's clasp. That broken Heart has throbbed for human suffering, has been wrung by the cry of human desolation. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" is a human cry. "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins"! Oh, man, Calvary is your altar, and there at last your debt is paid! No longer does Creation lie beneath you, silent before its God, because you, its only tongue, are dumb-stricken by your sin—because you, its only priest, have lost your power of sacrifice, and stained your altar and your victim. Here is One "who offered Himself unspotted unto God," "the Mediator of the new testament." "This Man, offering one Sacrifice for sins, ... by one oblation hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." This Son of Man is the "high-priest, holy, innocent, undefiled," "the Son who is perfected forevermore."

But, brethren, God has not willed that sacrifice should end on Calvary. It is true that the redemption there was so entire that no other is possible. It is true that the lifeless human body has since risen, and "dieth now no more." True that the blood-shedding there was an infinite surpassing reparation to God for sin, so that no crime could ever be committed that would lie beyond the reach of its saving tide. True that there was the fulfilment of prophecy and type: there the one all-holy Victim, of which the victims of the Old Law were but the shadow and the promise. But yet, sacrifice was not to end. A voice from the past, a prophet's voice, had told of another sacrifice, a clean oblation, which should be offered from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof. But only one day has seen its sun darkened over Calvary—only one spot of earth has been wet with the redeeming blood of Jesus. He wills His sacrifice to be nearer to His people than this—He wills to be offered up where you and I can see the offering every day, and can be ourselves present at His Sacrifice. He wills to be offered upon our altars, in the Mass. And so we pass from Calvary, which has taught us what is the worth of the Christian Sacrifice, to the supper-room, where, on this Holy Thursday evening, "the day before He suffered," "when evening was come," "the same night in which He was betrayed," He instituted, and offered up for the first time, that sacrifice which has brought into every land and into every age the Priest and the Victim of the Mount; which has remained, amidst the sins of a corrupt world, a clean oblation, whose purity, because Jesus is Priest and Victim, no crime has been able to sully, whose altars no persecution has been able to destroy.

See that group seated at the supper-table, waiting for the end. For the last time has Jesus offered the Paschal lamb; that Shadow is about to pass forever, and the Reality to take its place. The disciples have seen their Master wash their feet, and recognized, in that solemn rite, the preparation for something far holier, a type of the purity which the new mystery would demand. Jesus is now seated in their midst, He whom they know and love as their Lord and their God. His words have prepared them for some surpassing proof of affection; "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." They have heard Him say: "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." He tells them that this is the last time that He and they shall sup together before His passing to His Father. It is the hour for the last testament of Jesus, and with wondering eyes and fluttering hearts the disciples await the mystery. It is like the pause of expectation, when in a great church the crowd of silent, bending worshippers listen for the consecration bell. At last the moment has come. Jesus takes bread into His hands, those "holy and venerable hands"; He raises His eyes to heaven, and blesses the bread and breaks it. Then the disciples hear their Master, whose words they have known to drive out devils, to pardon sinners, to raise the dead; whom they have confessed to have the words of eternal life; they hear Him say, as He gives them the bread broken: "Take ye and eat. For this is my Body which is delivered for you." And in like manner they see Him take the chalice of wine into His hands with blessing and with thanks; and again His sweet voice breaks the silence: "Take, and drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood, of the new testament, which is shed for you." Listen to those words, brethren; hear them as Peter, and John, and James, and all that company of disciples hear them. "This is my Body which is broken for you: this is my Blood which is shed for you." Listen to them, learn them, hide them in your hearts, that you may rejoice in them as one who has found much treasure. For you, thank God, no heresy has twisted and contorted those words of Jesus, hampered their meaning, darkened their bright simplicity, robbed them of power, solemnity, and truth. Your ears, thank God, have never been assailed by the strained arguments, the special pleading, the ignoring of the testimony of a thousand witnesses, the perversion of centuries of history, by which men have sought to falsify this Testament of Jesus, and to rob us of His Legacy. I will not, therefore, disturb the peace of your meditation on these words to-night by even a reference to sorrowful unbelief. I only ask you to pray in pity for those who have been robbed of the joy of Holy Thursday.

"This is my Body, this is my Blood." Yes, dear Lord, we believe, for Thy words are plain and full of power, and sweet as honey to our mouths! We believe Thee as Thy disciples believed Thee, for we have heard Thee promise, as they heard Thee promise in the Synagogue by the lake of Galilee, that this should be. We remember, as Thy disciples at the supper-table remember so well, the day Thou didst tell us of this mystery to come. "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you." "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." And, Lord, when cold hearts found then, as others have found since, that those words were hard, and when many went away, and walked no more with Thee; and when Thou didst ask, "Will you also go away?" Peter answered, as we answer now, "Lord, to whom should we go but to Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yes, Lord, we believe: help our unbelief!

But it is not only true that the bread and wine have changed in the hands and by the words of Jesus into His own Body and Blood, but it is also true that that Body and Blood as they lie there hidden beneath the species, are truly *sacrificed;* that the life of Jesus is in some true manner laid down at the supper-table. And so we pass from a consideration of the reality of the Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to the reality of the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood, which is, as I told you, the special thought of Holy Thursday.

Again, the words of Jesus are our light. "This is my Body, *which is broken.* This is my Blood, *which is shed. Do this* in memory of me." That sacred Body which the Apostles hold in their hands, and receive into their breasts this evening, has not yet been crucified: those hands and feet have not yet the marks of the nails: that sacred Heart is still unpierced by the lance: that sacred blood has not yet been emptied from every vein, and drunk in by the soil of Calvary. And nevertheless Jesus says, "This is my Body, which is broken; my Blood, which is shed." Nay, more, He bids His Apostles "do this": break this Body, and shed this Blood. Already has Jesus, hasty in His love, sacrificed His life upon that supper-table, anticipated His Crucifixion, and given to His priests the power of offering that same sacrifice in memory of Him.

How is this, brethren? How is the life of Jesus sacrificed by the words of consecration? How has He, at that supper-table, made Himself a Victim, and how does He do it as truly now on the altar at the Mass? Let us ask those happy disciples who saw Him on this evening. There He sits, their Master, in their midst. There is He whose presence has brightened for them many a day of gloom and doubt; whose look of love has been their full compensation for all that they have left to follow Him, for all that they have suffered to be near Him; whose gentle voice has cheered them in sorrow, taught them in their ignorance, pardoned them in their sin. And there are they, His disciples, gathered round Him, clinging to His presence, watching every look, hanging on every word, because they know—He has told them—that they are soon to lose Him. It is in the fulness of this His intimate presence among them that He bids them make the first act of faith in Him, present in His Sacrament, present beneath the broken fragments of bread which He gives into the hands of each, present within the chalice of which He bids them drink. In this contrast of His twofold presence at the supper-table, His disciples see, and we may see, though it be dimly, why there is here a sacrifice, how there is here that laying down of the human life of Jesus, which makes the Mass instituted and offered here to be what it is—a true and real Sacrifice.

St. John has been leaning on the breast of Jesus, for he is the disciple whom Jesus loves. The purest, holiest friendship that has ever been—the friendship between the Master and the disciple—to-night receives all the tenderness of the cruel parting now so near. John is next to Jesus as he takes from His hands the adorable Sacrament. With full faith, with burning love, and with an awe too great for words to tell, he receives his hidden Lord. The language of Jesus has left him no shadow of a doubt. There in his hands is the same Jesus, the same God, the same Friend who is by him at the supper-table; and because it is the same, he adores and loves. But oh, St. John, you who know and feel better than any other that your Love is the same beneath those species, know and feel also better than any other how different is the manner of His presence there. Jesus at your side you see, you feel; you look into His eyes, you are pressed in His embrace. Jesus in your hands you love as really because you know that there also is your loving Lord and God; but you cannot meet His glance, for He is hidden, and you see but bread; you press, and the crumbs fall on the table; you bear Him to your mouth, but your hands feel no burden; you taste Him, and to the taste there is but bread; He enters into your breast and is your food, and yet no outward change. You see Peter, James, and Philip, and they receive their Morsel, and Jesus has become their food. And, O loving Saint, with horror you see Judas, too, take into his hands the God whom he has sold, and receive Him into a heart that is already the devil's home! Your Jesus is really here, but not as you have known Him. You have known Him as you see Him by your side, fair to see, winning hearts by His sweet look and gentle ways: and here there is but the broken surface of the bread. You have known Him going in and out among men, doing good to all, through Galilee, Samaria, and Judea; but here, lay Him down and He moves not, bear Him away and He resists not. You have known Him eloquent in speech, and captivating in familiar intercourse, but here is only silence, silence as of death. Truly, St. John, you know, you feel, that here in truth *is death.* Not that Jesus is really dead, for in your hands and in your breast He is the same Jesus who is living and by your side at table; but so far as His presence in this Sacrament goes it is a *state of death.* There, at your side, He sits in all His power and beauty, the Son of Man, and in the likeness of those men around Him. Here, in your hands, He is stripped, as far as you can see, of power and beauty and manliness: He lives, but it is as if He lived not; He sees, He hears, He loves, but it is through the veil of inert material food. And so, St. John, seeing that life thus mysteriously laid down, seeing this death, this living death, this slaying of your Lord in this bloodless sacrifice, you need no further vision to tell us of the "Lamb, standing as it were slain, for the salvation of the peoples," no fuller revelation to prompt the loud cry. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction."

You see, then, how at the supper-table on Holy Thursday, as well as on Calvary on Good Friday, on the altar as well as on the cross, the human life of Jesus is laid down in sacrifice. The manner of offering is different—that, at least, is plain. On Calvary there is blood-shedding in very deed, a life laid down in agony and torment, once and forever, for the paying of man's debt. At the supper-table, on our altars, in the Mass, that blood is shed mystically, that life is laid down sacramentally, Jesus living in this death of love. And not once, but often: at every hour, in every place, from the rising to the setting of the sun, is this "clean oblation," this "acceptable sacrifice" offered, is this death of Jesus wrought in our midst, in our churches, in our homes.

Think in this way of the Mass, brethren. Think of it through life, as you have thought of it to-day, and you will love the Mass. You will love it because you see in it the Sacrifice of Love: because you see in it the same Priest and Victim who offered Himself for you upon the Cross, and who bears even now on the altar, in hands and feet and side, the marks of what He suffered for you in the days of His mortality. And above all will you love the Mass because it is not merely a record and representation of that great bygone Sacrifice, but because it is actually, by virtue of the deed done at the altar, a present Sacrifice, in which Jesus, before your very sight, is slain and offered for you, and you can see, by lifting your eyes to that pallid Host, the sign of His mystic death.

Your love will be shown in your acts. It is not always easy to go to Mass. Even the Sunday Mass entails, at times, and for some persons almost always, considerable inconvenience. The length of the road, the uncertain weather, failing health, awkward hours—all these, at some time or other, make hearing even a weekly Mass an act of self-sacrifice. But do you not now see how well this may be made to fit in with the fact that the Mass *is* a Sacrifice, and that it is indeed a blessed privilege when assisting at the Sacrifice that Jesus makes of Himself for us, we are also called to make a sacrifice of ourselves for Him? The half hour in the church is the time that He offers His Body and Blood for us: the weary time before and after is the time when we offer our own bodies—sacrificing their comfort and convenience for His dear sake. And with this sacrificial idea before us shall we complain if, while He is being mystically slain upon the altar, we should, in our own places, have some little suffering to put up with? The easy attitude, too common in our churches, has surely nothing in it suggestive of sacrifice. Many, too, can and do attend Mass daily. Happy they! Happiest, when it is at a daily sacrifice of their comfort, of their morning's rest. What a welcome from the Victim at the altar awaits these victims of love! May that welcome be yours. May you so understand the Mass as to know how to value the sacrifices you make to attend it. May you realize more and more that Sacrifice is the great central principle of the Christian life, as the altar is the centre of the Christian sanctuary, the Cross the centre of the Christian world. May you ever act upon that faith, until the days of Sacrifice are over, and until your eyes, new-opened, shall see Him whom you love, no longer on a Cross, no longer on an Altar, but in unveiled glory on His Throne.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN.

SINCE Jesus came to teach us, brethren, not only by His human words, but also by His human deeds—words and deeds of God, but spoken and done by Him as man—it was natural that He should be conspicuous there where our need for His example was greatest. Amongst the very first duties of our lives is that of prayer. Of prayer, then, shall we be sure to find a bright example in the life of Jesus Christ. The lives of the Just are ever brightest at their close. Just as in a sermon, a preacher keeps what is most forcible for the last—the practical part to which all his previous preaching was directed—so in the sermon-lives of God's Saints, the lessons they teach are ever clearest and most touching when the lives that taught them are about to end. So was it with Jesus, the Saint of Saints. And so was it in the prayer-lesson of His holy life. It was His custom, as we read, to pray and spend the watches of the night in prayer; but it was when for the last time He went according to that custom to the Garden He loved, and beneath the olive trees which had so often looked down upon His prostrate, suppliant form, it was when for the last time He came across the Cedron to Gethsemani, that He allowed His children to see and hear Him pray, and to learn at once the lesson of His overwhelming sorrow and of His patient and prevailing prayer.

We read in the Gospels that Jesus, after night had closed on Holy Thursday, came with His disciples over the brook Cedron into a country place—a farm called Gethsemani, where there was a garden, into which He entered with them. And when He had arrived at the place, He said to them: "Pray, lest ye enter into temptation." And then, as if to show that He meant His prayer to be their example, He said: "Sit ye here till I go yonder and pray. And He taketh with him Peter, and James, and John: and He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad, to fear and to be heavy. Then He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful, even unto death stay you here, and watch with me. And going a little further—a stone's cast—kneeling down He fell upon His face, flat on the ground, and He prayed that, if it might be, the hour might pass from Him. And He said: Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee: my Father, if it be possible, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice, let it pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done. And He cometh to His disciples, and findeth them asleep, and He saith: What? Could ye not watch one hour with me? And He saith to Peter: Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, the second time, He went and prayed, saying the same words: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done. And returning, He cometh again, and findeth them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy: and they knew not what to answer Him. And leaving them, He went again, and prayed the third time, saying the self-same words. And there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed the longer; and His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground. Then, when He rose up from prayer, and was come for the third time to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow."

Such is the moving picture, given us in full detail by the inspired writers, of Jesus at His last prayer in the Garden. On those words—I may say on every single word—have the loving followers of Jesus pondered in secret meditation, commented in their writings, and preached in their sermons. In the office of the "Prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ," fixed for the week after Septuagesima, we may read the words of St. Cyprian, St. Anselm, and St. Ambrose, in which they taught, each in his own day, in Africa, in England, and in Italy, the lessons of that prayer in the Garden. Those lessons are many, and very various. For instance, one of these holy doctors explains in what points the prayer of Jesus is different from the prayers of ordinary men. This Saint takes the *divine* character of our Lord's prayer, if I may so speak, and shows us almost exclusively, in the various scenes of His prayer and agony and consolation, the eternal Son of God. But I think it will move us more to-day, and it will certainly be more easy, to consider rather the *human* character of this prayer of Jesus, and in the prostrate form beneath those olive trees, and in the agonized cry sent up from the blood-stained earth into the night, to recognize the form and the voice of a Son of Man.

Indeed, brethren, it would be hard to find any passage in the life of our divine Master in which He shows Himself more truly human, more touchingly like us in the inherent weakness of our manhood, than in the Prayer in the Garden. It would seem as if, in taking on Him there, in an especial manner, our sinfulness, He allowed our poor nature also to be most plainly visible; and as if, in allowing the weight of our sins to break His Sacred Heart, He allowed it also to reveal to us, as we should never otherwise have known, the moving truth that that crushed heart was the heart of a fellow-man.

For consider what could be more like our own case than the state of mind and body which He deliberately chose as the preparation for that prayer. We read that "He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad," "to fear and to be afraid." Of His own free will He entered into trouble of mind, and weariness of body. Strange preparation, brethren, for prayer! He chose it voluntarily because He knew that it would be the involuntary state of many a stricken soul who, sorrowful and sad and fearful, would turn for strength to prayer, and seek in His prayer a model. Saints have come, we know, so to overcome their minds and feelings, as to be able to enter on their prayer with a serenity undisturbed by any care of earth. They could say, with the Psalmist: *paratus sum, et non sum turbatus*—"I am ready, and I am not troubled." And entering thus upon their peaceful orisons, they have through long hours communed with God, and have with difficulty torn themselves from this felicity to return to their lowlier duties. When we read of their prayer, we may be tempted to say: "Ah, were such a tranquil mind and heart mine, I too could pray: but when *I* kneel down, my sorrow seems to grow darker round me, my nervous and uneasy spirit to grow more restless and impatient of restraint, and my very body to lose its strength and to cry out for indulgence." Ah, brethren, thanks be to our dear Lord for it, this was the very frame of mind and body that Jesus chose when He knelt down to teach us how to pray. He took us, we might say, at our worst. Those very circumstances which we look on as fatal to recollection in prayer, He chose of His own free will, that He might by descending to our extremest misery comfort the most miserable amongst us, and teach us that no trouble of mind or body should ever turn us from our prayer.

Yet observe on the other hand that Jesus prepared for His model prayer, not only by voluntarily entering into that trouble of spirit which is, in our case, beyond our control, but also by putting from Him those distractions which we can put from us if we will. First, He withdrew from the larger body of the disciples, and with a chosen three entered the sanctuary of the Garden. Here He withdrew again, "a stone's cast," from His three companions, remaining thus alone with His Heavenly Father. It was to His Father that He had come to that lone hill-side to speak: it was before His Father He was now about to plead, with the eloquence of human sorrow, for relief: it was to His Father's will that He was about to make that great *Fiat:* it was from His Father's hand that He was to receive that hideous, crushing load of sin, that was to force Him, oozing blood, flat upon the ground. This was why Jesus left even the Prince of His Apostles, and the disciple whom He loved, and withdrew in the soli tude of the night, to speak with His Father alone. "Stay you here, till I go yonder and pray." In these precautions, as they would be on our part, Jesus acted again as man. *He* had no need of guarding against distractions. The presence of others could never disturb the full vision of His Father's presence. Yet did He enter, as I have said, into our weakness, and act as though He feared to share our lapses and our lassitude in prayer. The very compromise He seemed to make with the human desire for human sympathy marks the special character of this prayer: for, withdrawn as He was from the chosen three, He yet bade them watch with Him: "Stay you here, and watch with me." And when the watchers failed and slept, He left His prayer, and came to them (ah, what a journey that "stone's cast" must have been to the agonizing Saviour!); He came to them and pleaded with them, again and again, to "watch one hour" with Him. To feel that they too were, like Him, watching and praying against the day of temptation they were about to enter, this would have been a solace to His breaking heart: and though the chalice His Father gave Him to drink was not to have even that drop of comfort in it, still He sought it, with a human yearning, and with His own weary hands, and broken voice, woke three times the faithless watchers, and three times asked them not to desert Him and leave Him lonely in His grief.

Thus, dear brethren, did Jesus in His preparation for this last prayer, in which He deigned to teach us how to pray, act most like a man, and surround Himself with the weakness, the precautions, and the natural longings of frail and sinful humanity. The sacred prayer itself is, as the preparation for it would have led us to expect, strikingly human. There is a great simplicity about real sorrow. The set phrases of conventional mourning are scattered by the blast of genuine affliction. Nothing remains for the quivering lips to utter but a few familiar words, said often lightly at other times, but oh, with what new meaning *now!* Scarcely articulate, with no subtleties of thought or feeling, the language of a broken heart is a language common to every people and to every age. And now He, who bears the sorrows of all, speaks words that all may speak, words utterly human, yet, like the Sacred Heart from which they spring, also utterly divine. Listen to the moaning voice that from the earth to which that face is pressed sends up the cry of suffering humanity. "Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee: my Father, if it be possible, if Thou wilt, let this chalice pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." And again, when He had already drunk deep of the bitter cup: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." And even when the third deep draught of sorrow has been drained, the prayer of Jesus is, as the evangelist has written, "the self-same word"—the self-same cry for relief—the self-same confession that the chalice is all too bitter to lose any of its bitterness in the drinking—the self-same, and oh, how human, act of resignation—if *I must* drink it, Thy will be done!

If I *must* suffer, then God's will be done. It is not my will, indeed. I would rather that the cup of suffering should pass from me: I pray constantly, and with all the fervor of this human heart, that it may so pass, that I may be spared what I so fear. But if this cannot be, if God's will be otherwise, if I *must* suffer, let it be. God knows best. Brethren, this is not, you will say, a very high kind of resignation. I have heard the philosopher declare that such resignation as this is nothing more than making the best of a bad case. I have heard fainter hearts cry out that this, the only resignation they can reach to is, indeed, no true resignation at all. "To be resigned because I must, has surely no sort of merit. If I could, I would have God's will otherwise; but since I cannot change, then must I accept, His will. This is not resignation!" So wails the sufferer. But (ah, the consolation of the thought!) the resignation of Jesus in His prayer in the Garden, was even this: "If I must drink it, Thy will be done." It *is* resignation, dear soul. What was high enough for Jesus, is high enough for you. You would have done with your ill-health, with your poverty, with the hardness of your lot, with the injustice of your persecutors, with, in fact, your cross. You pray that it may be taken from you, or lightened, or sweetened. But since it seems this is not possible, since God leaves you no way to escape, since you *must* bear it, well, His Will be done. In your better moments you may come, for His sake, to love your cross. But on the whole it is grievous to you: His will be done. Bear it bravely, because you must bear it. Your suffering is not of your own free choice, it is true: but your resignation is. You choose to be resigned to His blessed Will, though you know He has willed that you should suffer.

In this way, brethren, has Jesus taught us, in the resignation of His prayer, a lesson that lowly human hearts can understand. It is a higher call to pray for crosses, to choose to drink the cup of suffering rather than let it pass. *That* Jesus taught also: but He teaches us, poor weak children of sorrow, the lowlier lesson, as well, of free and willing resignation to what we pray, at the same time, may be taken from us. His cry for relief, and His cry of resignation, go out together from Gethsemani to every home of human sorrow, to teach the sufferers among men that their unwillingness to suffer is no sign of their want of Christian patience, as long as it is joined, as it was in the prayer of Jesus, with the willingness to accept from their Father's hand what He chooses for them, and what they are not able to refuse.

Such is the very human teaching of our dear Lord in His prayer in the Garden. See how He has come down to us, to the level of our lowly feelings and our lowly prayers, and shown us that we may be truly Christian, even though we cannot hope to be ever more than truly human. A higher standard is not taken from us: there is heroism still left for the heroic followers of Jesus: but in the lesson we have been taught to-day we have found the comfort that the example of our Master is not for heroes alone, but reaches even the weak hearts, the wavering wills, the shrinking bodies, of poor mortals like ourselves.

One more look at Jesus in the Garden, and we have done. "Being in an agony, He prayed the longer; and His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." He has not changed His prayer, now that He has entered on this fearful struggle. "The self-same word" is still repeated, though the blood is now flowing and the horror of death is on Him—the prayer for relief, the act of resignation: it is as though He knew no other. "And being in an agony, He prayed the longer"; prayed that the chalice might pass; prayed that God's will might be done; prayed amid the horrid visions of sin that were filling His soul with fear, amid the anguish of body that was forcing the blood from His veins; prayed the self-same word, and prayed the longer. Sufferers, remember this upon your bed of pain. The agony will take from you all power of sustained thought, all relish for even favorite devotions. In the stress of that time you may have to cast away the very prayers that have become habitual. Still in your agony, if you would be like your Lord, you will pray the longer. You will cry to your Father for relief, you will make your acts of resignation. "Father, if it be possible, let this pass from me: nevertheless, if I must suffer, Thy will be done." What pain is there conceivable which, far from making that prayer impossible, would not rather intensify its fervor? It is "the strong cry and tears," the prevailing prayer of the agonizing. And we know that it did prevail; for "there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him." The relief was, like the prayer that won it, in human guise. Strength the poor manhood of Jesus wanted to bear up that weight of woe, to prevail in that awful struggle: strength for a soul sorrowful unto death: strength for a body pouring out its blood upon the ground. The sorrow was not taken away: more blood had yet to be shed, amid even greater agony; but the prayer in the Garden had made this possible, and had given to the soul and body of the Man of Sorrows the endurance His human nature needed. In suchwise let us expect the answer. Suffer we must: but we shall be strong to bear that suffering if we only pray as Jesus prayed. The angel of consolation will not take away our cup of affliction; but he will offer us the cup of fortitude as well. The strength of God will bear us up, even when the friends of earth prove faithless. He will not sleep, but will watch with us while we suffer and while we pray, through our lifelong struggle, even to the end. Sweet Jesus, may we, being in our agony, pray the longer, saying the self-same words of trust and resignation that Thou hast taught us, and receiving, as Thou didst receive in Gethsemani, strength to say, even amid the sorrows of death, "Thy will be done!"

THE TWO THIEVES.

‘Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”—LUKE xxiii. 43.

THESE words of mercy, dear brethren, like the first words spoken by Jesus on the Cross, were words of forgiveness to sinners. Unlike the first, however, which were addressed to God, these were spoken to one of the two robbers who hung on their crosses beside our Lord. For we read: “And with Him they crucify two others, thieves, one on each side; one on the right hand, and one on the left, and Jesus in the midst. . . . . And the soldiers mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, and saying: If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself. And the self-same thing the thieves also that were crucified with Him reproached Him with; and they reviled Him. And one of these robbers who were hanged, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. And we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”

Now, brethren, it seems to me most useful on this Good Friday to recall to mind the fact, that here were two sinners who were crucified beside our Lord, who saw His sufferings, who made very earnest reflections on His Passion, but with such widely different results that one ended in heaven and the other in hell. This view of the matter is, surely, one that comes home to us. For we are sinners: we are actually here gathered together and determined, even with some fatigue of body, and at, it may be, not a little inconvenience, to watch Jesus on His Cross, to listen to His words; and surely we desire that this our watch beside our Crucified Saviour should end in penitence and forgiveness with the good thief, and not in impenitence and reprobation with his unhappy comrade. Nor can we deceive ourselves, looking at these two crucified criminals, with the thought that in merely coming here on this Good Friday, in giving up pleasures and business to attend this lengthened service, and to reflect upon the sufferings of our Lord, we have thereby done enough, and are secure of the grace and blessing of this day of grace. No. For the poor wretch whose unhappy soul went down this Good Friday evening, even at the foot of the Cross of Jesus on Calvary, down to its everlasting torture in hell, this poor reprobate had kept the three hours' Agony; had shared, in terrible reality, the sufferings of Jesus crucified; had heard His words, and seen His forgiveness, and watched His death. Alas! brethren, shall we ever know as much of the Cross as that bad thief? shall we ever suffer as he suffered, or in such close companionship with Jesus? And he was lost, and before the night had fallen on Calvary, and while his stiffened and distorted corpse still hung, limb-broken, awaiting its robber's grave, his soul was buried in hell. And so it may come to pass—oh, it is not impossible!—that some poor sinner who has come so far on the way to repentance and forgiveness, who has come to hear these sermons and to reflect upon these saving truths, may go no further: may leave this church unchanged, and go forth, as he came in, reprobate, with one more grace neglected, one more Good Friday lost, his heart more hardened, more resolved than ever not to seek forgiveness at the feet of the priest of God—further than ever from Paradise, nearer than ever to hell.

Or if this be an extreme case, as indeed I hope it is, there may be those who may lose the special strength and light that God would give them to-day; who also may go out as they came in, unchanged by the contemplation of their Crucified Lord; if no worse, at least no better for Good Friday. To them, too, it were well to point the lesson of these two strangely contrasted spectators of the scene on Calvary; of these fellows in crime, fellows in suffering, fellows in the company of Jesus Crucified, fellow-hearers of His words on the Cross, fellow-witnesses of His death; but widely parted as heaven and hell in the fruit they drew from all. For not only the reprobate sinner, but even the lukewarm Catholic, may draw bitter, not sweet, waters out of the Saviour's fountains: it does not take an evil-minded person, but only a careless one, to lose a very great and precious grace. Let us then, all of us, sinners as we all are, and whatever be our life's history or our guilt in the eyes of God to-day, let us all see wherein lay the difference of two contemplations of the Passion which had such strangely different results, in order that we may share the good thief's grace, and avoid the other's reprobation.

And first remark that, at the beginning, *both* thieves joined in reproaching and reviling our Lord. No wonder, indeed, that they should see and feel the full force of the scornful taunt—"Himself He cannot save." "He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him; for He said: I am the Son of God." Yes, it was a bitter disappointment for them. For they might well have expected that, if He had saved Himself, and had, as He was challenged to do, come down from the Cross, He would also have saved them from their torture, and have brought them too from their crosses. In the first shock of that sad breakdown of his last hope, even the good thief gave way, and joined in the reproaches, maddened, poor fellow, by the pain of his crucifixion. But then his moment of grace came: his eyes were opened: he saw his Lord and his God in the poor innocent Sufferer before him; his reproaches ceased, words of pity came, confession of his own sin, one heartfelt prayer, and grace had done its work. Not so his wretched comrade. He too, no doubt, recognized the innocence of Jesus: but what was that to him? All he knew was that innocence could not save Him from the torture of the Cross. And so looking on the gentle Sufferer he cursed Him for His weakness. "He blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us." It was no prayer for salvation—that might have been answered: it was a mere infidel's jibe. *If* Thou be Christ—a likely story! And so the unbeliever's prayer—the Holy Ghost has called it a blasphemy—is the last sin of this sad life, and he dies rejecting salvation on the very day of salvation, and passes from the fiery torments of the cross into the fire of hell. O Saviour, grant us faith in Thee as we now gaze upon Thee Crucified; trust in Thee to save even the most hardened sinner amongst us—for we know Thou art Christ, and canst save us, if only we *will* be saved.

The other thief knew this, and acted on his knowledge. He willed to be saved, and he was saved. Let us see how; for surely it is just what we should strive to see. When the moment came, and his eyes were opened, and he recognized in Jesus his Saviour, he at once spoke, and his words are full of instruction, and show the history of his conversion. For it has a history, though it was so rapid, and it is the history of every true change of heart. First came that interior faith which made him separate himself from the scoffers, and rebuke his fellow-robber for his unbelief. Then, springing from that faith, came fear of God. "And dost not thou fear God," he asks, "seeing that thou art under the same condemnation?" Then came the humble confession of his sinfulness, and his willing acceptance of his awful punishment. "And we, indeed, are condemned justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." Surely, an honest confession for one nailed to a cross; a generous acknowledgment of heavy guilt that could merit such heavy expiation! Thirdly, he expresses compassion for his innocent Saviour: "But this man hath done no evil." Ah, how those words must have gone to the Heart of the Divine Sufferer: how they must have moved the sorrowing Mother that heard them—the compassion of that agonizing thief upon his cross! And now the time has come, and the last earnest prayer of a generous soul, full of faith, is heard above the taunts and mockery of the crowd: "And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom." He asks for a memento, and, God be praised! he hears the gentle voice—the voice of absolution from the past, of hope beyond his wildest expectation for the future, the sentence, even before his death, of his merciful Judge—"Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." *This day*—this Good Friday—before nightfall; and in Paradise, with his Saviour! Ah, how lightly he hangs upon his cross now: how his poor heart goes out to the Sacred Heart of his Jesus! how lovingly and compassionately he watches from his cross the pain and humiliation of the Innocent One! With what awe, yet with what unutterable hope he hears His death-cry, and sees His sacred Head sink forward as He gives up the ghost! He himself still lingers on; the gathering film of death does not prevent his eyes from resting on the sacred Body of his Saviour. And so he hangs, with the great Crucifix beside him, until the soldiers come and put an end to his sufferings, and dispatch him to his reward with Jesus in Paradise. Happy soul! happy penitent! Happy road that led so quickly, and, even amid much bodily torture, so easily, from faith to fear, from fear to contrite confession, from confession to compassion, from compassion to one earnest prayer, and through that prayer to Paradise! Where is the sinner who may not travel that road Sweet Saviour, grant that there be no such impenitent sinner here!

Dearly beloved, we have now before us a bright example for our reflections on the Passion this Good Friday. We have the terrible example of the miserable soul that saw indeed the Cross and the Saviour on it, but that saw with a hardened and unmoved heart, and rejected the salvation that was offered him. And we have the consoling and encouraging example of the happy soul whom Good Friday morning found a sinner, but Good Friday evening a saint. He saw his God upon a Cross, and made his act of faith in Him. He recognized the terrors of His judgments, and made his act of fear of Him. He saw his own sinful life, and sorrowed for it and confessed it. He watched the patient agony of the innocent Jesus, and compassionated Him. And finally he poured out his whole heart in that one trustful prayer—"Lord, remember me!" And he saved his soul. There is not one here who may not do the same. Oh, if there be one soul that is now wavering—that will and will not be saved—that dreads the very grace and mercy of this Good Day—I ask that soul just to wait and watch by the Cross now; to make an act of faith, an act of fear: to review the sinful past in sorrow of heart: to look with compassion at that Saviour on the Cross, and to send up to Him, into His loving Heart, the one earnest cry—"Lord, remember me!" Oh, do this, weak waverer, and you will find strength to make a new thing of your poor life; do this, and your confession will come easy to you; and as the torments of the Cross vanished for that penitent thief, so will the difficulties you dread in your conversion disappear, and what seemed to you to be chains that no power could break will burst like threads before the strong grace of God. O brethren, pray that this day all poor sinners, if there be any here, if there be any whom you love, who are bound by the ropes of their lifelong sin, that all may now burst their bonds asunder; that if there be any who fear the confession of their sins—who cannot bring themselves to say that past confessions and past communions have been bad—that they may in this day of Grace find grace honestly to do so; that as happy penitents they may hear in the absolution of the priest the echo of this word of mercy and forgiveness on the Cross: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Jesus and Mary help them!

THE RESURRECTION.

(LOW SUNDAY.)

THE week we have just passed, dear brethren, has been one of much joy to the Church of God. It has been for her as bright and glad as the week before was gloomy and distressing. It would not be possible to find in the Calendar two weeks more strongly contrasted than Holy Week and Easter Week. And the reason of this you know. It lies in the facts commemorated. Nothing could have been sadder to the Spouse of Christ than His sufferings, His death, and His burial: nothing more joyful than His Resurrection from the tomb, a Victor King triumphant over suffering and death. And this Easter joy, like all other joy, gains in intensity by the contrasting sorrow. Those who spend, as many outside the Church do spend, the days of Holy Week in festivity, looking rather to man's liberation than to the Passion of Jesus, cannot taste the full Jubilee of the Catholic Eastertide, and do not, certainly, feel as the Mother and the friends of Jesus felt when He whom they had seen crucified, dead, and buried, appeared to them again, risen glorious and immortal. Let us now, on this the octave day of our Paschal joy, see calmly, as perhaps we could not see before, the full reason and extent of our Easter gladness.

And first, as I said, we must realize what had been our loss. It is not easy, so used are we to the thought of Jesus risen from the dead, to enter, as the poor Apostles entered, into the utter bereavement of Holy Saturday. But a week before, and how high their hopes had been! "We hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel," said the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. How utterly that hope seemed crushed! "Our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him . . . . and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done." "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?" Observe, moreover, brethren, the fact pointed to in these last words, namely, that the crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus were as public as it was possible for them to be, and were also actually proved by many witnesses. The place of crucifixion was "nigh to the city." He went thither "in His own garments"; His name and title, "written in

Hebrew, Greek, and Latin," they "put over His head upon the Cross," so that "many of the Jews did read," as well as the Greeks and Romans. The cruel exposure of His Sacred Body made all deception impossible; and the very mockers, who passed, wagging their heads in scorn, gave unwitting testimony that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was crucified.

As His crucifixion was beyond all doubt, so also were His death and burial. We read that the soldiers "sat and watched Him"; and that when crying out with a loud voice, announcing to all His own death, He gave up the ghost, "the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus" saw and proclaimed the fact. "And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned, striking their breasts." No evidence could be stronger, no death more patent. The very earth gave its shuddering avowal. And the greatest witness in nature was not wanting. Ninety millions of miles away from Calvary, the darkened sun declared that his Maker it was that was there suffering and dying; and the stars that shone out in that noonday eclipse looked on as witnesses from on high. But even this would seem insufficient were there not official record of the death of Jesus. And so the soldiers came from Pilate, and, having broken the legs of the two robbers, "after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, did not break His legs. But (as it were to make assurance of His death doubly sure), one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water, and he that saw it hath given testimony: and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true: that you also may believe,"—believe, that is, that He was truly dead, and pierced to the heart upon the Cross. Moreover, Pilate, doubting as to the death of Jesus, sent for the centurion, and asked and received his testimony as the official witness of His death. Overwhelming evidence this certainly was of the death of Jesus Christ. And His burial was as open. It was, in a way, official. For the Governor's permission was asked, and, after due and formal evidence, granted, to take down the Body of Jesus and bury it. Joseph of Arimathea was a man of wealth and position, and did his work now openly and boldly. The four Evangelists tell of his reverent preparations for the burial of Jesus—of his buying fine linen, of his new tomb, hewn out of the rock in a garden hard-by Calvary. And St. John tells us of Nicodemus, too, whose wealth was a tradition among the Jews, and whose offering of one hundred pounds' weight of myrrh and aloes was greater than had ever been made even at the burial of kings. At great expense, then, and with all the rites usual in Jewish burial, was the Body consigned to the tomb, on the eve of the great Festival, in view of the gathered multitudes: and the gravestone, which, we read, was "very great," was rolled to the door of the monument. Again, as in the case of His death, was the burial of Jesus officially notified to the Roman Governor. The chief priests and Pharisees demanded his official guard of the tomb, and lest this should not be precaution enough, they closed the tomb with their official seal.

Dear brethren, can we see any sufficient reason for all this evidence, official and other, that Jesus Christ was, as our Creed tells us, "crucified, dead, and buried"? I think it is easy to see the reason why the Holy Ghost has been thus explicit on this point. Consider, then, the immense difficulties that would surround such a fact as the resurrection of a dead man. How many would, in the first place, refuse to believe that he had died at all. How they would say that his friends had been deceived by a mere feigned death, or by a stupor that looked like death, or by their own terror, or by their assumption that, as a matter of course, he would have died necessarily under such treatment. The fact of his being alive once proved to them, men would want evidence of the most extraordinary kind to convince them that there had ever been a true and real death; and they would seek in a thousand directions for a way to throw doubt upon the proofs. And above all would they so strive, were this resurrection brought as a seal upon doctrine that they detested, and on a life that they had destroyed. But such was the case. And hence the vast importance of this great body of evidence brought by the four Evangelists to prove the public Crucifixion, the unmistakable death and burial of Jesus Christ. For if He did not die and was not buried, He could not rise again from the dead; and, as St. Paul says, "if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain."

And now, dear brethren, that we have seen, at such length, the evidence of His crucifixion, death, and burial, let us turn to the evidence that He "rose again, the third day, from the dead." That evidence is more familiar to you, and we need not delay so long over it. There is this difference in the nature of the evidence, and it is a difference that we should expect. His death was at the hands of sinners, and was proved, beyond yea or nay, to them. Pilate, the chief priests, the Pharisees, the centurion, the soldiers, the crowds—all saw and owned that He was crucified, dead, and buried. All these were offered also *sufficient* evidence, had they received it, of His Resurrection: but it was to the believers in Jesus, to His Mother, His friends, His Apostles and disciples that He made it convincingly manifest. Preaching to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, St. Peter said: "This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof *we* are witnesses." And again: "The Author of Life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which *we* are witnesses." And preaching in Cæsarea, the same Apostle said: "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God, even to *us* who did eat and drink with Him after He rose again from the dead." The evidence, then, of His Resurrection was clear and beyond doubt: but it was to be the foundation of our Faith, and so was revealed to the children of Faith, and by them preached to the children of unbelief.

I have said that the evidence given to the Jews was sufficient to prove our Lord's Resurrection. The witnesses were, again, official—the soldiers on guard at the sepulchre. They had felt the earth quake; for this evidence the earth gave of His Resurrection, as it had done of His death, *then* in shuddering horror, *now* in an outburst of exultant joy; they had seen the flashing form of the Angel of the Resurrection in his snow-white raiment, and, recovering from their terror, some of them had fled into the city to tell the priests what had taken place. That these priests gave some sort of frightened credit to their tale is shown by the "great sum of money" that they gave to purchase the soldiers' silence. But this very fact was itself the strongest indirect evidence; and St. Matthew tells us how "the word was spread abroad" that hush-money had been given by the priests and taken by the guards.

However, as we have seen, the great mass of evidence regarding our Lord's Resurrection from the dead was given to His friends and not to His enemies. So it had ever been. And though the fact of our Lord's burial and Resurrection—"The sign of the Prophet Jonas"—was said by Jesus to be an exception, and was to be a sign to the "evil and adulterous generation," still it was a sign to be contradicted; and it was to be understood and accepted only by His chosen ones, who were to receive ample evidence of it, without at the same time being deprived, in that evidence, of a salutary trial and confirmation of their faith. Their acceptance, or rather their understanding of that evidence, if it was in the end sure, was certainly, in the beginning, slow. It is impossible to read the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, and of our Lord's manifestations of Himself to His Apostles and disciples, without wondering at their slowness of belief. He Himself rebuked them for this, but chose to remove their doubts little by little. At first the news brought by Mary Magdalen and the other women to the Apostles was regarded by them "as idle tales: and they did not believe them." When the two disciples returned from Emmaus and told the others how they had supped with Jesus, St. Mark tells us that they were not believed. And even when Jesus appeared in their midst, as of old, and when they heard His well-known voice bidding them "fear not," still "they were troubled and affrighted, and they believed that they saw a spirit." But no incredulity could stand long in hearts that burned in the presence and at the words of the beloved Master. Nor did He wish to prolong the hour of trial. The wonder of fear gave way to the wonder of joy that He whom they had seen crucified, and over whose death and burial they had shed such bitter and hopeless tears, should be with them once again, fitfully indeed, coming and going in a way new to them, but still His old dear Self, with His gentle presence, and comforting voice. "Touch me not," He said at first: but soon He was to say, "see my hands and feet, that it is I myself. Handle, and see." And so the evidence grew, and when the disciples had left the false and unbelieving Jerusalem, and had gone into the quiet Galilean scenes of former happy days, Jesus revealed Himself to His chosen ones, speaking with them and eating with them; and, at least on one occasion, He appeared to as many as five hundred disciples at the same time. Thus, in the words of St. Luke, "did Jesus show Himself alive, after His Passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the Kingdom of God, and eating together with them." In this wise, with the slow growth of a Faith that was to last, did those Apostles become witnesses to their risen Lord "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth"; thus gradually was built up that strong Christian belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which has stood unscathed against the persecution and the infidelity of every age.

Dear brethren, it will be of little account to us to have thus recalled the evidences of our faith in the Death and in the Resurrection of our Lord, unless we quicken that faith into action. Faith in the Resurrection, without works, is dead. What, then, shall we *do*, as the result of these Easter thoughts? The Apostle bids us "walk in newness of life," as Christ is risen from the dead: and also to "serve in newness of spirit." Now, that means rather a change in our way of doing our actions than a change of the actions themselves. It means that the life and spirit we should now throw into our daily duties should be new, and that the aim of those actions should be also renovated. "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above . . . . mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth." There is one part of our life that will undergo a very great change if we only take to heart the lesson of Easter. It is that part which is occupied with the thoughts, the anticipations, the fears of death. As Jesus triumphed over death, so shall we if we be true to Him. The gloomy grave is before each one of us; but we remember now that Jesus was also laid into that gloom; and, as His grave was found on Easter morning empty, so shall ours be sometime found. "He is not here, he has risen," will one day be true of every grave. The burial was not the end with Jesus, nor will it be the end with us. True, nothing seems to us more absolutely final than the sound of earth falling on the coffin lid, than the mound fresh sodded overhead

But our Easter faith tells us that such is not the case. The grain of wheat is buried, but it will spring up afresh; and, as Jesus Himself reminds us, unless it be buried it cannot be so renewed. For children of Faith there is such a thing as a *hope* of death, not the feverish longing to be rid, even thus, of pressing evil, but the calm desire of that journey that is to take us home. It was to give us this tranquillity in death that Jesus became a partaker of our flesh and blood, and died in the same, "that, through death, He might destroy him who had the empire of death, and might deliver them, that, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to servitude." O blessed delivery! Happy we if we are this day freed from the servitude of the fear of death! Happy we if, by meditating as we have done on the death of Jesus and His Resurrection, we come to lay aside our fear of the one and live in the hope of the other! Happy, if we can banish forever the vain terrors of the tomb, and see there, clearly and more clearly as our end approaches, not the haunting horror of ghost and demon, but with radiant face, and snowy garb, and hand uplifted in hope, the Angel of the Resurrection!

JUDGMENT AND MERCY.

IN the eighth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, we read how a poor sinful woman, whose sin was established beyond doubt, was brought to Jesus by the Pharisees, her enemies and His, in order that they might force Him either to condemn her, and so lose His character for clemency, or acquit her, and so lose His character for sanctity and justice. Jesus, seeing the charge of horrible and publicly known sin established against the unhappy woman, stooped down, and wrote in the dust on the pavement of the Temple. This was, as many say, to show that our sins are written by God as it were on dust; for as such writing remains only as long as it is not blown or wiped away, so our sins are remembered by God against us only as long as we neglect by prayer and penance to blot them from His memory. Jesus rose, after writing thus upon the dust, and pronounced the sentence He was called on to pronounce: She deserves to be stoned, indeed; but "he that is without sin among you let *him* cast the first stone." Again He stooped and wrote upon the ground, and when He rose up from writing, lo! the Pharisees had slunk away. They had called for a sentence, and the sentence had been delivered against themselves. Their hypocrisy, their sham, outward sanctity, their interior defilement—this had Jesus condemned, and they, now turned criminals, had gone away abashed, and left the poor adulteress alone with Jesus. It is, as St. Augustine has beautifully said, "the Sinner left alone with the Saviour, the sick woman with her physician, the miserable with the merciful." "Woman, hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more."

Brethren, is not this a touching scene? See, side by side, the bitter condemnation by sinful men of a fellow sinner, and the gentle, compassionate forgiveness by Him who came to seek and save that which was lost. When we think on this story, we are moved to love Jesus, moved to trust in His full mercy; and moved, moreover, to shun all harsh and unmerciful condemnation even of those whom we know for a certainty to be grievous sinners. But we may, perhaps, wonder whether, after all, such mercy and forgiveness would suit us as well as it suited Jesus. Could we, with justice, be thus tender toward those who have grievously and openly sinned? Would not such conduct only encourage the sinner in sin, by showing how easy is forgiveness? Surely "I will not condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more" is a sentence worthy of God: but should it be ever the sentence of a man called on to judge a fellow man?

Dear brethren, why do we condemn sin? Is it not to save the sinner? *Vengeance* on sin, that is God's. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." *Correction* is ours, but not vengeance. And how shall we best correct? Is it by fear or love? Is it by harshness or mercy? Is it by stoning the sinner, as the Pharisees would do, or by forgiving and advising, as Jesus did? Let us consult our own experience, and ask which is the more likely way to move sinners to sorrow for sin, and amendment of life: which has had the greater effect on our own lives, the threats and thunders of God's justice, or the pleadings of His mercy: the stormy reproaches and chastisements of our fellow-men, or the gentle, loving, forgiving reproof of those who share in the mercy and sweetness of the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

Surely in asking such questions I answer them, or rather, your own hearts answer them. Fear and punishment may terrify the sinner, may crush him, and at times bring him to realize his guilt; but it takes love and mercy to bring him to sorrow and amendment. We know how many a time a harsh rebuke has made us harden our hearts like steel against the truth, and has even driven us on, with fresh impetuosity, in the ways of sin. But a kind word, a tear shed over our misery, the pleading yet reproachful look of one who hates our sin, but loves ourselves —ah, this it is that has broken our proud spirits, and bent our stubborn knee, and brought us full of sorrow and full of love to the sacrament of forgiveness—back to the grace and light and peace of God.

Dear friends, we know this well. But do we act as if we knew? Is it thus we deal with sinners? When we are most anxious to turn a friend from his evil courses, from his intemperance, from his dissipation, from his careless life, is it thus we act? Do we go to him in anger or in love? Do we harden our hearts toward him, or soften them with prayer and compassion? Is our language like the soft voice of Jesus saying, "Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavily burdened," or like the terrific, "Depart from me, ye cursed": is it an invitation to forgiveness and hope or a condemnation to punishment and despair? We have ourselves sinned: we have ourselves heard the call of love, and found mercy where we dreaded justice; and now we deal with others as though we never heard of Jesus, or of His gentle Heart, or of His wish to seek and save, or of His unwillingness that any should perish. We act as if the Pharisees were our models, and Jesus, and His merciful Heart, but a sign set up to be contradicted by us.

Look into the world, and what do you see? The loosest of livers, but the strictest of judges. Men with their hearts full of sin, and their hands full of stones. They act as though they hoped for mercy by being unmerciful: as if they were to escape Hell by sending others there—as if by showing the Almighty Judge how mighty they had been in judgment, they might escape the terrors of His tribunal, and the rigors of His justice! Truly they read the Gospel backward, and set their lives in exact opposition to the life of Jesus, who, flinging to the world His challenge, "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" went down among sinners, and bore their sins, and suffered their punishments, that He might win the right to be merciful to them, and with His own death save them from everlasting death. Behold the contrast between Jesus and the Pharisaical world in the judgment of sinners: there is what we have to imitate; there, what we have to avoid.

O Jesus, soften our hearts to sinners that we may win their souls to Thee. Sacred Heart, make our hearts gentle and forgiving while keeping them pure, that we may attract the sinner while we drive out the sin. Make us write, as Thou didst, our sentences of condemnation in the dust, that we may write our mercy on the hearts of men; and grant that by being severe to our own sins, and gentle and forgiving to the sins of others, we may come to receive in the measure we have measured out, and, in the company of the merciful, to find mercy!

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

"God commendeth His charity toward us."—ROM. v. 8.

DEARLY beloved, the charity of God is the model of our charity; and if I come to you to-day to suggest to you the motive and the measure of your charity, where can I, as a Christian preacher, find a higher or a truer type than in the charity of God? St. Paul tells us that "God commendeth His charity toward us"; and He does so, not only to move us to gratitude toward Him, but also to lead us to imitate Him. How He commended His charity to us we may see touchingly recorded in the Gospel. For remember, brethren, that gentle Son of Man whom we watch as He answers the sorrow-stricken father's call to visit the house of death, who, as He goes, works another merciful cure on the poor sufferer of years, and bids her go in soundness and in peace; whose visit is greeted with derision, but ends in raising the dead to life—this merciful Visitor, meek and humble, yet, oh! so powerful in His meekness and humility—this is no other than the Almighty God Himself. Familiar as we are with such Gospel examples of the charity of Jesus Christ, of His visits to the homes of poverty and sickness, of His gentle deeds and words among the sufferers of earth, are we familiar enough with the thought that He who did these things was indeed the Eternal God? We *know* it, but do we always remember it, even when we recall the charities of Jesus? Let us then look to-day at the dispensation of God's charity to us, that we may at however great a distance, be imitators of Him, and shape our deeds of mercy to others after the manner of His mercies to us.

Let me ask you, then, to observe closely this fact in the charity of God; that He not only did the great act of charity for us, the act of redeeming us, but that *He came down to our level to do it.* We are bought by Him at a great price; but He did not throw down the price of our Redemption, as I may venture to say, from His high palace in Heaven, down into the mire in which we suppliants lay. No; He came Himself in lowly guise with His own pierced hands and from His riven Heart to give us the price of our ransom. "He emptied Himself," as St. Paul puts it, "taking the form of a servant." That is to say, He supplemented the great essential mercy of Redemption with other mercies which were not essential. He not only wrought, as our Saviour, the charity of our salvation, but He *commended* that charity to us by the unspeakable gentleness of word and deed, and by the utter self-sacrifice with which He wrought it. If I may worthily use the expression in regard to the Almighty God, His charity appeared to us not only in His gift, but also in His manner in giving: and indeed we may say that in a way the manner was more than the matter of the gift. For the matter of His charity to us was the gift of salvation; but the manner in which He gave was by giving us Himself as Saviour. We can well fancy the apostles and disciples, brethren, half forgetting the great work that Jesus came to do in the winsomeness of His presence and in the teeming profusion of His mercifulness when, as one of them, St. Peter, so touchingly said, "the Lord Jesus came in and went out" amongst them. So passing sweet was it to have Him for their companion, for their friend and teacher, that they may easily have forgotten the main fact that He came to be their Redeemer. So in this day's Gospel, His miracle on the poor woman by the road may have caused them for the time to forget that He was on His way to work a yet greater miracle on the Ruler's daughter. In this way, I say, the accidental and accessory kindness of Jesus was such as almost to overshadow the essential and central act which brought us from death to life.

And does it not seem as though God meant this to be so, and meant us, if not to value more, at least to dwell more upon, the mercy of His life amongst us than the mercy of His death for us? To be sure, He lived only that He might die: for this, all was merely preparatory. Yet the preparation was of three-and-thirty years, and He lived in the broad light of day, while the sun was darkened at the hour of His death—as if we should look upon His life rather than upon His death. And, oh! what a life to look upon! How it commendeth the charity of God toward us. So full of gentleness, so lowly and so winning in act and word! Need I recall those acts of His: how He embraced, and laid His hands upon the little children whom He would not suffer to be kept from Him: how He visited the houses of the sick and sorrowful, curing some, comforting all: how His tears flowed when He stood by His friend's grave, and when He saw the city He loved heedless of the day of visitation? Nor do you forget the words that revealed the gentleness of the Heart from which they sprang—"Come ye all unto me who labor and are heavily laden and I will refresh you." "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not." And to the unfriendly traitor, "Friend, whereto art thou come?" and for those that nailed Him to the Cross, "Father, forgive them!" And again mark, brethren—for this is the point I desire to impress—that all this kindliness of deed and word was apart from the main act of Redemption, which was accomplished on Calvary, at the moment of His death, and then and there alone. This, then, is the charity of God—a charity first of paying the price of our salvation; and, secondly, but most impressively and clearly, of commending that saving alms by meekness and humility, and all the graciousness and winning sweetness that made up the life and character of our dear Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It is natural to expect that we shall find the Church a close follower of her Divine Founder in this characteristic of His charity; and her deeds of mercy, and the large charities of her every age we may expect to see accompanied and commended by Christlike gentleness and consideration. Indeed had her Master never set her the example she would still have naturally acted thus. For she would not be likely to forget the spiritual in relieving the corporal distresses of her children. She would know how vain it is to take away the pain of the body and to leave the far more bitter pang of the soul. And so in all the dispensation of her world-wide charity throughout the ages she has ever won the hearts of those whose poverty she has relieved, whose hunger she has fed, whose afflicted homes she has visited. For them has she emptied herself and taken the form of a servant. Her crown, her sceptre, and her glittering robes, these have commended her at all times to the great ones of the earth; but it was the lowly garb of the humble religious, the plain yet kindly ministrations of poor priests that commended her to the poor and lowly, and made easy the task of saving the souls thus moved and won. It was so from the first, in the days of what has been called "Christian Communism." In the Acts of the Apostles, the first record of the Church's history, we read: "And all they that believed were together, and had all things in common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as every one had need; and breaking bread from house to house they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people." Ah, how different that from the fierce communism of these evil days, that spirit of uncharity above and uncharity below, which has had in other lands such disastrous results. No wonder that the gentle dispensation of those primitive days of Christianity bore the fruit of which St. Luke tells us in another part of the Acts, where we read that "the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul, neither was there any one needy among them."

Again, the humility which commended the charity of the Church of God is to be seen in the records of the Bishops of every age, beginning with the Supreme Pontiff whose proudest title was *Servus servorum Dei*—"the servant of the servants of God." They not only emptied their purses to the poor, but, like their Master, they emptied themselves of their high honors and of the dignity which men love to assume with exalted office, and moved among God's lowly ones, the lowliest of them all. You remember how St. Laurence, the deacon of Pope St. Xystus, kept the list of the poor of Rome; how he and the holy Pope knew every poor Christian home in the city, and had on one list 1,500 names for relief; and that was in the first part of the third century. St. Laurence was not ashamed of his beloved poor; for when asked by the Pagan Prefect to show him the treasures of the Church, the saint went out to the well-known haunts of poverty in Rome and collected all those whom his charity supported there, and showed them to the Pagan, saying, "Behold my treasures, the treasures of the Roman Church." In the same century, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, shone before all the Christians of Africa not only as the glorious teacher and wise administrator, but also as the devoted servant of the poor. Nor was he content with himself spending all he had upon them, and lavishing his gentle care upon the most abandoned, but he preached as well to the richer members of his flock, exhorting them both by word and by letter to relieve His dearly-loved poor. He used to say, "Let not that money sleep in your purses which may be profitable to the poor. Since a man must of necessity part with it sooner or later, surely it is wise of him so to distribute it, that God may give him an everlasting reward." Ah, brethren, that is some of the common sense of saints! Would that St. Cyprian were in this pulpit to move you to feel some of the love and compassion he felt for the poor of Christ!

And as the gentleness which accompanied the generosity of God's charity found such faithful imitators among the prelates of the Church (for I need not say that I have but selected two in a distant age as specimens of the episcopate of all time), so did it find a home in those religious Orders which grew with the growth of Christianity. Holy men and women, burning to alleviate the distress of soul and body that they saw around them, became themselves poor, and bound themselves by a vow of poverty that, as poor amongst the poor, they might follow more closely in the steps of Him "who His own self bore our sins in His Body." Yes, as the Eternal God commended His charity by emptying Himself, and coming down to the lowly level of those whom He redeemed, so did these, His heroic followers, leave riches, and honor, and friends, to be outcasts among outcasts, the poorest of the poor, acquainted, like their Divine Master, with infirmity, that they might more tenderly and sympathetically relieve it. It were a long story, that of the charities of the Orders of men and women in the Church. But the lesson is a plain one. Their power, and the secret of their extraordinary favor with the people, lay not so much in the fact of their large material alms, nor of the medical skill which for centuries they all but monopolized, as in the humility and tenderness of their charity, so unlike all else that poverty met with upon the face of the earth. A Protestant historian of the first rank has in one of his most eloquent pages told the story of the success the "Begging Friars" met with in England. Their work in London alone in the early years of the thirteenth century endeared them to all the people. Their charity was commended by its humility. "Fever, plague, or the more terrible scourge of leprosy festered in the wretched hovels of the suburbs. It was to haunts such as these that Francis had pointed his disciples, and the Grey Brethren (as these Friars were called) at once fixed themselves in the meanest and poorest quarters of each town. . . . . It was amongst the lepers that that community chose the site of their houses. . . . . Huts of mud and timber, as mean as the huts around them, rose within the rough fence and ditch that bounded the friary. None but the sick went shod." These words of a non-Catholic writer find singular confirmation in the unanimous testimony of all historians regarding the desolation and entire abandonment of the poor that followed on the suppression of these monasteries and the dispersion of the friars.

Alas! brethren, we have but scanty records of the charities of Christianity in Ireland. Convulsions which shook the nation to its foundations left but scattered traces, and dim, uncertain memories, of how Irish monks ministered with loving humility to the wants of the Irish poor. But enough remains for us to see that this country was no exception to the Christian rule of charity, that there was no departure here from the model charity of God, and that in Ireland, as elsewhere, that charity was commended by the sweetness and meekness with which it was dispensed. And may we not point to the close-knit union between the great religious orders in this country and the people, especially the poor, as a proof that the spirit of Irish charity was Apostolic, shaped on the humility of the charity of God? Amid our many sorrows we have not this sorrow, that the Irish priest, whether regular or secular, ever raised himself in pride out from the ranks of God's poor, or ever ceased to identify himself and his interests with the cause and with the interests of his lowly flock.

But, brethren, it will especially guide us to the end I have in view, to consider the society in whose behalf I plead to-day, and to see both in the character of the saint who gives it his name and his patronage, and in the working charity of the society itself, precisely and pre-eminently that quality of humility and self-abasement which commends to men the charity of God. Of St. Vincent de Paul one short story will suffice. He was, as you know, a child of the people, and had labored himself in the fields for poor wages. His talents, and above all his sanctity, in time raised him to be the most conspicuous figure in all France. Men spoke of him as "The Great Vincent." He was in high favor in court. The queen would do nothing without his advice. Amidst all this honor, so apt to turn the head and puff up the pride of even holy priests, his servant came to him one day, in his house in Paris, to tell him that a poor, ragged-looking man was at the door, and said he was St. Vincent's nephew. Now, St. Vincent was just then awaiting the visit of some nobles of the court of France, who were coming to consult him, and he gave way for a moment to a feeling of shame, that they should find such a wretchedly-dressed peasant to be his nephew; and so he gave the servant a sum of money and told him to give it to his nephew and send him away. But the servant was not down-stairs when grace had done its work. "Ah, Vincent, is this your humble charity?" And the saint rushed down, and in the presence of all there embraced the poor man, told him how honored he felt to be claimed as his uncle, brought him in, introduced him to his household, and when the noblemen from court arrived, presented him to each of them as his dearly-loved nephew. There, brethren, is Christian, God-like charity, because it is charity commended by humility. The alms that Vincent sent down by his servant may have been very great and generous, but how poor in comparison with this outpouring of the heart with which Vincent followed it! The mere opening of the hand, in that case, would scarcely have escaped the resentment of the poor man, and the censure of Almighty God; but the opening of the heart as well, *that* commended the charity of Vincent to God and man.

And in that incident in the life of St. Vincent I see, brethren, the very type of all that world-wide benevolence which has, since its institution, commended the charities of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It has not been so much the money they have disbursed, nor the food nor fuel nor clothing they have distributed to the needy, as the gentle and Christian spirit in which these have been given, as the humility with which those in high social position have come down to the level of those whom they have succored, have inquired into their wants and visited their homes, and given them not only bodily relief, but that sympathy that heals the wounds of the heart, and relieves the distresses of the soul. This it is that warms my heart, I confess, dear brethren, to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and this it is that commends to me their charity. It is not the mere dole, it is the personal intercourse with the poor, of those pious and devoted men and women, their knowledge of the needs to which they minister, their utter disregard of all those barriers that a proud world has erected between class and class—in a word, it is the feeling that they have Christian hearts that makes me warm to their charities as I cannot to any other, and that fills me with the desire of moving you to be generous in their regard. Ah! given through the hands of humble

Christians, such as you know these men and women to be; given to be distributed with gentleness and discrimination, will not your alms have a double value? We all want to extend as far as possible the sphere of our benevolence. Here is a ready means, by which the money given in this church to-day will have powers far beyond the value of the coin itself. The material relief it will purchase for the bodies of the poor of this city will be supplemented by the larger charity, the Christian sympathy it will administer to their souls; and, above all, by the supreme mercy of helping toward the contentment and resignation of those whose lot it is to suffer poverty, by showing them the active charity and self-sacrifice of those born to happier things.

The true value, as a social fact, of this Christian charity may be estimated by the extent to which the worldly, or, as I must call it, the unchristian poor-relief has failed. Tell me if the hundreds of thousands of pounds yearly spent in these kingdoms by the State in relief of the poor have had any effect in either reconciling those relieved to their needy state, or in bringing them to look with love or gratitude on the classes charged with their support. Sum up in your minds all the food and clothes, and fuel, all the great public establishments provided for the poor in this country, for instance, and ask yourselves is there any corresponding union of hearts between the poor and those taxed for their relief, or appointed as guardians of their interests. To put it in another way, what likeness is there between the way in which the Poor Law Guardians and the way in which the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul are regarded by those who are respectively relieved by each? I fear the very comparison will make you smile. And, oh! why is this? Surely it is a striking illustration of how no charity will relieve the souls, as well as the bodies of the poor, save such as is commended by the gentle humility of those that dispense it. At this very moment, in a city ramified by State charities, in which official poor-relief is carried to a point of almost absolute perfection, in the city of London, what do we see? Even as I speak, police and military are watching the masses of angry men whose hatred for their wealthier fellow-citizens is only restrained from violent outbreaks by the terrors of shot and steel. Yes, the almsgiving of London has failed. From the palace window, from the splendid carriage, from jewelled fingers, the coin is flung down to be clutched by the grimy hands of poverty: but no blessing follows. It is not mercy, hence it neither blesses him that gives nor him that takes. It buys off the desperate suppliant for a time, but only for a time, and without mitigating one pang of his deep despair. It is given without gentleness, without humility, and it is received without gratitude. And hence the scandal, in the very centre of civilization, of armed men face to face with the threatening masses of the poor. Ah, brethren, there is a better way to break those masses and to quell that angry multitude than by bayonet or baton. There is the power of Christian charity, commended to those poor sufferers by Christian humility and gentleness. And as it is, I verily believe that the only thing that really stays the hungry hordes in London from wreaking their mad vengeance on their wealthier neighbors is, that here and there through that vast city are societies—some Catholic, but many more Protestant—which work upon the Christian principle, and send their members in and out as messengers of mercy among the poor. And God will bless them, no matter what their creed: indeed, they already have some portion of that blessing in the fact, undoubted as I believe it to be, that it is their Christian humility that has commended their charity to the poor, and has, in consequence, broken the desperation that would otherwise sweep before it the strongest power that could be brought to check it.

If we have, in this favored city, a very different spectacle, let us humbly thank God for it. It is not that we have not poverty—God knows we have enough to wring our hearts. But there has grown up here, in the sight of all the nation, a grand spirit of Christian charity for which it would be hard to find a parallel. Those whom God has blessed with wealth have not only never stinted their benefactions to the poor, but have themselves humbly and at no small self-sacrifice shared the labor of dispensing them. And it is that fact to which I now point in appealing to you to give your alms to-day into the hands of the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. By doing so you will ensure your money being spent in such a way that while relieving the needs of the poor it will also pour balm upon their souls, and unite them with you, as in the early days of Christianity, making you " of one heart and one soul." I ask you to be generous now, in this time when so many elements threaten us with a stormful and distressful winter. I ask you to be generous, for every penny given through the hands of this society will be as an oil upon troubled waters, as rays of sunshine through darkling clouds. I ask you to give, then, first, for the saving of society from the perils consequent on hard-hearted and calculating, and therefore unchristian, donations to the poor. I ask you to give, secondly, that you may have the blessing of those guardian angels of the poor who so love this channel of relief because it bears comfort to the souls as well as to the bodies of those whom they have care of. I ask you to be generous in your offerings, remembering that you will never be in better dispositions for meritorious almsgiving than now when you have the highest motive before you, the very charity of God, and when you give even in His Holy Place. Give, again, freely, because you will not get better value for your money than God will give. Trust Him: you may in years to come forget to-day's donation: He will not forget it, it will be before you in judgment. Do not resist the impulse now to give all it is in your power to give. For that impulse is the grace of God who is pleading for His children in the very depths of your hearts. Give now and here, that in the dark winter nights you may be comforted by the memory of this almsgiving, and may not have your couch haunted by the cries of the sleepless poor. Give to this blessed society, and your alms will be doubled in the gentle charity with which they will be dispensed. Oh, if you will not give at my bidding, hear the pleading voice of Him who gave His life's blood for you. Hear Jesus crying to you with outstretched hands: "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure, and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom." And not for words of mine, but for the love of your own souls, and while you are tempted to stay your hand and stint your alms, listen to these closing words of Jesus, so full of terror, so full of hope: "For, with the same measure that you shall measure withal, it shall be measured to you again."

May God give you strength to be generous now, and bless you through life with grace and plenty, and in death comfort you with the memory of your charity to-day. Amen.

PERSEVERANCE.

A PRIEST, dear brethren, in the long hours he spends in the confessional, has many troubles to enter into, many a fear, many a sorrow. This one trouble is always there, whether he raises his absolving hand over the sinner of years or over the penitent of a week—*Will this one persevere?* Whether the bowed head bears the light curls of boyhood, the dark locks of manhood, or the gray hairs of old age, the haunting thought is still the same—Will he persevere to the end? I absolve thee now; but how long will the grace of this absolution last? Oh, the weight of this thought to the priest who, in the spirit of St. Paul, loves those penitent souls as he loves his life, to whom they are his joy and his crown! This thought prompted your director to ask me to say a few words to you about this fearfully important subject of Final Perseverance. Boys, young men, old men, members of this Confraternity, what about your perseverance? You are intelligent Catholics, and wish to know the entire truth about the matter. This, then, is the Church's doctrine. Perseverance is called *active* and *passive.* These words have an important meaning. Every work done by the help of God's grace has two parts: the part that comes from God, His pure, gratuitous gift, and man's part, or his correspondence with that gift. *Passive* perseverance is the continuing in a state of grace as infants do, or the dying in that state as those do "whom the Lord findeth watching"; for the soul is passive here, and we regard God's gift alone without reference to any action of the recipient. Man's part, on the other hand, or the use he makes of the graces given him, is called the *active* part of perseverance, because he is required to work with the grace given him, to do his duty, and thus, by active fidelity, to "work out" his salvation. When man does his part—his active part—in the persevering use of grace received—and when God adds to that work of man His own free and gracious gift of final perseverance, then you have the full grace of perseverance—that grace so important that no soul can enter Heaven without it; for he who perseveres to the end, he, and he alone, shall be saved.

A poor man is taken up and started in life by a rich nobleman. He receives some capital, and by his labor increases it. He works energetically, and uses this capital. Hard times come; he is in fear of losing all; and his rich friend gives him more help. The years go on. All the poorer man's prosperity has depended on and been supported by the other's gifts; but he has done his own part: he has worked honestly and constantly. At last his benefactor, seeing his industry and worth, sends for him, and says: "I gave you many helps: I started you in life, and helped you through it. You have on your side worked well, through hard times and good times, and you have much increased what I gave you. Now, I am going to give you another and a greater gift. I am determined to finish generously what I began gratuitously: I now name you heir of my property and sharer in my honors. You are now yourself wealthy and noble." This splendid bounty is, you see, entirely free—as free as the first gift of capital to the poor man. But this last great gift is made by the nobleman when he has tested the faithful industry of the man he helps. It would not be given to an idler or a spendthrift.

So with God and the soul. We are poor. In baptism and the first graces we were set up in the spiritual life. From time to time God gave us further help in sacraments, and helps such as is this Confraternity. On our part, as I trust, we used them. In baptism we received graces to renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and we have acted up to those graces. Or if we have not done so, God has given us more: the absolution of the priest set us up again when we had lost all by mortal sin, or were in danger by venial sin. But, as in the case of the rich benefactor, God has yet another and a greater gift to make us, the crown and completion of all, the grace of the day when to all these gifts He will add the call to His eternal glory, to the security from danger and sin in His Kingdom, and by His side in Heaven. Thus it is, you see, that our salvation begins with God, continues by His help and our faithful work, and ends by His free gift, again, of Final Perseverance.

It is but the story of the talents. To the poor servants money was given—one, two, five talents. The faithful servants worked with those talents, doubled them by their industry; and then, at the end, their lord, finding how well they had used his first gifts, gave them a far greater gift yet—a share in his wealth and honor and joy. "Well done! *because thou hast been faithful over a few things*, I will place thee over many: enter into the joy of thy lord." This is the teaching of the Church concerning perseverance. It begins with God, and it ends with Him—His free gift in both cases; but He has made it to depend also on our own endeavors—our faithful "working out" of our salvation. Into these two parts, then, perseverance has rightly been divided: into *active* perseverance, or our own part in our salvation, and *passive* perseverance, or the continuance with us to the end of the bountiful grace of God.

But there is one thing more—one terrible truth—that the Church teaches us concerning perseverance. The Council of Trent has declared anathema against any one who, without special revelation from God, shall say that he will certainly and without fail persevere to the end. No amount of sanctity, no fulness of early promise, no length of faithful service, can warrant me to say that such a soul will certainly persevere, and die in the grace of God.

We know well how little we can rely on good beginnings. See the ship sailing forth upon her voyage. She is stout and staunch, firm in mast and rigging, stately in her strength. The sun is on her as she shakes her white shrouds to the breeze. She is the very symbol of youth, and joy, and hope. But there are eyes that watch that glorious ship sadly enough as she sails bravely forward, for before them is another scene. They seem to see a wild and raging sea beating on an iron coast. Broken and disabled, her masts in splinters, and her sails in shreds, that ship is lying on the cruel rocks, wave after wave bursting over her, while the night is filled with cries of human agony and despair. O poor ship! of what use is your bravery of to-day, your bright and joyous sailing forth, if *this* is to be the end? Brethren, good beginnings do not always mean good endings; and history and experience tell us enough to make us tremble for the best among us. Look at what we know of Solomon.

He came of a holy father, David, whose penitence has given the world expressions for every sorrow, whose joy is heard still in the psalms of the Church's office, whose words have been the consolation of hearts in every age and country. Such was Solomon's father. See the son reared by such a parent—a child of God's own promise. See the glory of that young Wise Man. He knew more than any man, more of God and the things of God, and in the fulness of that wisdom he wrote those great books of Wisdom that remain to guide us to this day. He raised the Temple of Jerusalem, and was directed in his work by God Himself. What human life ever had such an opening? Where was there ever such a boy, such a man? Where was there ever such wisdom and sanctity combined as in Solomon, God's Wise Man? But, alas! the wreck of the fair ship, her ruin and despair, are not symbols strong enough for the end of Solomon. That noble form was degraded to the most shameful impurities: he who had loved Wisdom beyond all things of earth was consumed with unholy fires; and he who had raised a temple to the living God, and beyond all writers had told of the might of the Lord of Hosts, bowed himself, in his ripe years, to idols of wood and stone, and to the filthy obscenities of the heathen.

Oh, brethren! are we as wise, as holy, as near to God, as convinced of the vanity of creatures, as was Solomon? And shall we live secure of our future? Is there one here that can say, "I shall persevere to the end"? No. The Church declares such certainty cannot be. Young boys, who with light hearts and elastic step, come week by week to your Confraternity meeting, can you say how long you may be faithful? Your souls are fresh and pure. How long will this last? When home restraints are weakened and passions grow in strength, shall you remain true to your promise of to-day? And when your manhood shall have ripened into old age, when your elders here have all passed away, when I and your priests of to-day are gone, shall yours be the aged faces gathered round this pulpit? Shall you still be faithful? Oh! dear boys, you do not—you cannot—know. Young men, struggling now with your passions, and gaining victories by constancy in confession and communion, and by regular attendance to the duties of your Confraternity, shall the angel that now joyfully leads you week by week to these meetings, and so often to the confessional and communion rail, shall that faithful angel ever have in sorrow to follow your steps into the paths of sin, or on to your final ruin? You do not know. You are pious, pure young men: you may be godless, impure old men: you cannot tell. And you, old men, who look back on years of sober service, who have been faithful through hard times, and have lived on into these brighter days, you who have lived to see the salvation of this Confraternity, the glory of your people, you who are ready to say with holy Simeon, "Now thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace": you who in holiness and long-tried fidelity stand at the very brink of the grave, shall you persevere, through the few years, ay, the few months, that remain of your trial? You do not, cannot, know. On you will the Church's anathema fall if you dare to promise yourself certain perseverance to the end. Brethren, such is the awful truth. There is not one of us can be sure of his perseverance—sure of escaping hell, and of saving his soul. Now we can understand the full meaning of St. Paul's words when he bids us work out our salvation in fear and trembling.

But beside this great uncertainty stands an equally great certainty. It is this. If we, young and old, in fear and trembling though it be, work out our salvation, do our part, and if God in His mercy does His part, finishing the work He has begun in us, then, I say, it is absolutely certain that we shall persevere to the end, and be saved.

How, then, shall we do our part in persevering to the end? How shall we induce God to do His part, and to crown our efforts with final success? My dear friends, it is a solemn thing to give advice where so much is at stake. But this is not any advice of mine, merely, but advice that you have heard many a time before. Your part in your final perseverance consists in being faithful to your present graces; in persevering *now*.

This Confraternity is a great and splendid grace from God, His free and bounteous gift, one denied to many, but given to you. *Use* this grace. Be faithful. Be faithful from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, and in your fidelity lift up your hearts in hope. *Be regular.* There is great life and lasting power in regularity. When a physician feels the pulse of a man, and finds it high and rapid at one moment, and weak and slow at another, he knows the health of that man is bad, and that if this continue life cannot last long. But when the pulse is strong and steady, beat by beat equal and unchanging, then he knows that all is well. So, when the religious life of a community is one of fits and starts, now hot and fervent as mission or retreat comes round, but again cold and sluggish when the excitement is over, then it is not well, there is not much promise of perseverance to the end. But when we see this throb of religious life, as regularly as the day and hour come round, pour the stream of manhood by road and street into this church, whence another throb sends it forth refreshed and renewed to circulate through the parish until the next pulsation comes; when we know that "Confraternity night" is as well known in this town, and even by non-Catholics, as the day of the week, so regular is its recurrence; then indeed, we may have confidence, and trust in the vigor of religious life amongst us, in the permanence of that life, and its perseverance to the end. Be regular, and then you will be doing your part well, and giving hope of your perseverance. Be regular at the Sacraments, living in the grace of God in the hope that it may be granted you to die in that grace; and make up your minds not to abandon your present grace, not to desert the Confraternity. What of a soldier who runs away in sight of the enemy, or when he has some hardship to suffer? What of one who for some foolish pique or trifling difficulty proves untrue, flings away the arms God has put in his hands here, and flies? Will *he* persevere? Will *he* be hopeful, think you, when he goes to meet his captain and his King? Be active, then, in your perseverance: beg the grace of fidelity, brave, unflinching, self-sacrificing fidelity to your holy Confraternity, and you will have done your part in persevering.

And even those whose grace is not the grace of being members of this Confraternity may lay the lesson to heart, that this fidelity from day to day is the surest means of being faithful unto death. They should tremble for the final issue if their lives are but records of resolutions made, then broken and laid aside—of fervent promises consigned to cold forgetfulness—of repeated fair starts that have always come to nothing. For such a record they should fear. But well may they hope if, on the contrary, they have clung to resolutions even amid many saddening failures; if they have remembered old promises and striven to keep them;

if, albeit on a lowly level, they have walked bravely on, and have made some progress, all too little though it seems, in the way that leads to God. Let such souls take courage—God will make perfect their imperfect work, He will come to meet them on the way, and will Himself bear them to their journey's end. They are doing their part, and they are asked to do no more.

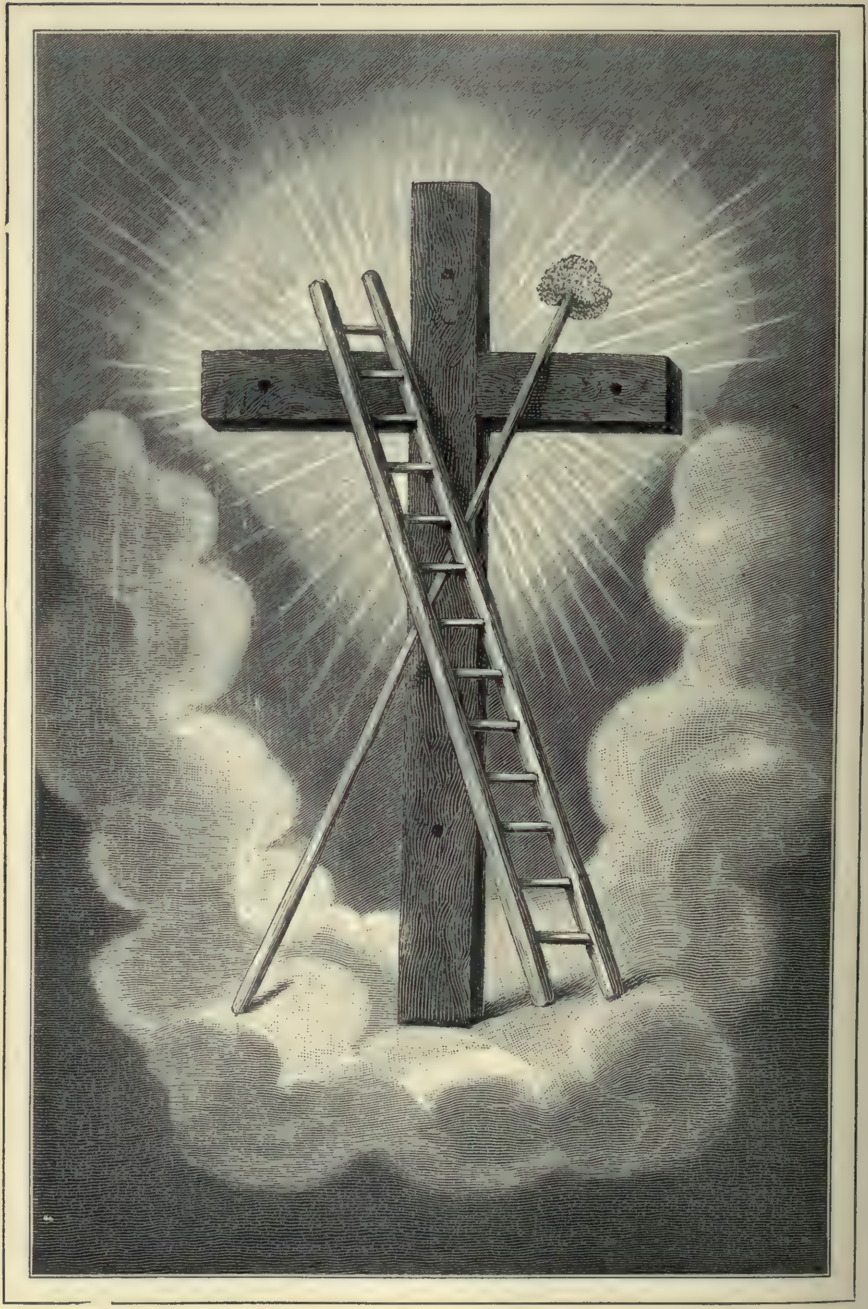
But then, brethren, there is God's part—His final mercy that alone can keep souls faithful to the end. How may we gain this? How induce God to give us the grace of final perseverance?

Ask, and you shall receive. Ask. Pray every day of your lives for final perseverance. Ask, pray: young and old, pure souls, penitent souls, ask that you may persevere, pray for final perseverance. Pray to God that, when by His grace you have done your part, He would do His, and finish the work. You tremble to think that you cannot know whether you shall persevere and be saved, or fall away and be lost. With fear and trembling indeed you work out your salvation, but with hope and confidence, too, for you know your loving Master will not refuse you if you continue faithful in your prayer. Let us pray, in the beautiful words of the Church, that He who has begun by His grace everything of good that is in us, may by that same grace help us to do our part through life, and may Himself complete all by that crowning grace beyond any merits of ours—the grace of Final Perseverance, or, as we love to call it, the grace of a Happy Death.

" Prevent, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our actions by Thy holy inspirations, and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may always begin from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended. Amen."

REVEREND D. A. MERRICK, S.J.

The Sermons herewith presented are selections from a course entitled "Sermons for the Times," delivered by Reverend D. A. Merrick, S.J., within the period of a year, at St. Francis Xavier's Church, New York.



Our Only Hope.

ON ATTACHMENT TO PRINCIPLES OF FAITH.

"My just man liveth by faith; but if he withdraw himself, My soul shall not delight in him. But we are not of those who withdraw unto perdition, but of those who have faith for the saving of the soul."—HEB. x. 38, 39.

IN this text the Apostle marks the distinction between the merely natural and the supernatural man. The supernatural man *lives* by faith; faith is the principle of his spiritual life. But the mere natural man knows nothing of the things of faith. The land of faith is for him a region lost in the clouds and beyond his intellectual ken; its language is unintelligible to him. Now, my dear brethren, we are living to-day in the midst of a world made up of purely natural men. The heretics of three hundred years ago talked a great deal about faith. They made much of it,—too much of it; they said that man was justified by faith alone, without good works, and they repeated after the Apostle, with energy, that without faith it was impossible to be saved. True, what they understood by faith was something very odd, namely, an interior assurance of being justified, but, whatever it might be, they believed that it was a supernatural gift. Their descendants have rejected those old notions. They care very little about faith, or about assurances of being justified. Works are all they ask for; and they do not require that these should be supernatural. "Provided a man be a good man," they say, "it matters very little what he believes." "I believe that all religions are equally good, and that the best man is the man who does not rob or injure his neighbor." This way of talking does not prevent them from robbing and stealing from their neighbors. But to this way of talking and thinking, and to the ways of acting which are the sequence of it, has the Protestantism of Martin Luther and of the stern Calvin, by a strange wheeling round from one extreme to another, in our time come. Religious indifference, naturalism, rationalism, scepticism, a general division of the natural order of things from the supernatural order, have been the final result of the working of the principles of those men so much praised as the champions and pioneers of freedom of thought by the infidels and free-thinkers of the present day. Even those who still profess to believe in the existence of a supernatural state, eliminate all consideration of it from the practical concerns of life. The current maxims of the day are that society, government, should exist independently of religion;—and so they do. Education without religion; in the family indifference to religion—or, as an English Prime Minister, condescending to become again a writer of romance, expresses it, religion without "orthodoxy," is what people want, and what they have. The consequence is that, possessing no longer the loadstar of faith to guide them, we find men—and women—in every realm of thought, propounding the most wildly radical and subversive theories, perhaps some of them in the sincere desire to carry out logically what principles they have adopted, and to spread the reign of truth as understood by themselves. But the material, no more than the natural, man can understand the things of God, and only extravagance and confusion may be expected of those who have abandoned the certain light of revelation to grope in the dark regions of unbelief.

Such is the world which surrounds us—a world of chaos; and all who compose it are not good. It is a bad world, a lying, rebellious world, at enmity with God. The world never could, above all the world as it now is never can, be the friend of Christ. It is antichrist. It does not love the truth. It possesses not the truth, it sympathizes not with the truth, but with falsehood. Principle is not what it cares for; success is the measure of its praise. It calls virtue vice, and vice it calls virtue. The servitude of crime and anarchy and despotism it calls liberty, and true liberty it calls oppression. Robbers it calls liberators, and the generous defenders of most sacred right it stigmatizes by the name of mercenary. Its newspapers, its orators, its politicians, its books on history and science, are all leagued in this great conspiracy against truth, and immorality is made the willing instrument for the propagation and defense of incredulity. And the multitude—the multitude which is made up of those many heads which think little and believe a great deal—repeats the echoes of all these reverberating voices. This is the world in the midst of which we live; and in this world of infidelity, of ignorance, of falsehood, and of misrepresentation, the Catholic must stand his ground. No human respect, no pressure of the crowd, no speciousness of reasoning, must cause him to waver in his attachment, not only to his faith, but to those conclusions which he knows to follow logically from his principles of faith. He must be firm and consistent. For no man deserves the name of a true, staunch Catholic who sympathizes with a world of which the first instinct is opposition to his religion and its holy law. Yet there is great danger of this sympathy existing among us. For it is hard to be at constant variance with all those who are round about us. It is hard—very hard in practice—not to be affected by prevailing modes of thought. It is hard to be called a slave in mind, to be told that one is behind the age, to be jeered at as superstitious. There is no cause of wonder, then, if we find the greatest danger for our young Catholic men and women, especially the more educated ones, at the present time, to be that of losing their attachment to the legitimate conclusions of their principles of faith. A great danger this is, indeed; for it is the remote beginning of final scepticism and unbelief. The poor, as a general rule, will keep their faith well enough: they value it as their greatest treasure, and they will not quarrel about its most remote conclusions. The simple-minded are not inclined to be incredulous. Intellectual pride is what generates the disposition to scepticism and doubt. The danger is, therefore, principally for the rich, who have not received the blessing which God has granted to the poor, who attach themselves easily and naturally to this world, because they see and enjoy its sensible, pleasant side. And the same danger exists proportionally for all who are more or less well-to-do. For it is a fact proved by history that evil mental influences begin to exercise themselves first upon the higher classes of society, and from these descend gradually down to the lowest ranks. But in a country like ours, where the divisions in the social circle are not strictly marked, where what is called a common education is almost universal, and where, either by conversation or by the reading of newspapers, that great medium for the communication of "notions," the floating ideas of the day are conveyed to the minds of nearly all persons, almost all classes of Catholics are immediately exposed to the danger of losing their attachment for the teachings flowing from their principles of faith.

Unfortunately not only this danger, but a real want of attachment to the conclusions to be drawn from Catholic principles, exists. How often in a large city like ours, do we hear such declarations as these: "Father, I have a great many Protestant ideas; living among Protestants, you know." "There are a great many things in the Church I don't understand; don't be surprised if I am half a Protestant." And indeed how many Protestant, or liberal, or rather irreligious, notions are lodged in Catholic heads! How many opinions which, if developed, would become rank heresies, are grafted on branches that ought to be fed with nothing but Catholic sap! How much loose thought abounds! how much want of thought! and how much want of principle! how much timidity, how much human respect, how much fear of men, and blind following of the talkers and scribblers of the day! How prone we find Catholics to accept the most liberal views on every subject they can hold within the pale of the Church! How they dislike their liberty in this respect to be restricted! How instinctively they join the opposition party, and sympathize with whatever is least ultra-Catholic, and especially least ultra-Roman, in the Church! It is the spirit of the world all out. A man may not be known to us to be a greater man than any other: he becomes the champion of some liberal principle or platform, and behold he is made for us a hero and a giant. A theory is propounded about which we understand little or nothing: we—the men, and especially the women—attach ourselves nevertheless passionately to it, because it has the favor of the world and is the fashion of the hour. An obscure point in history is mooted for discussion: we all take sides unreservedly on the matter, as though we had been rummaging in folios. And thus those sympathies of our nature which were given by God to follow principle, and by acting on the heart to elevate us to the performance of great deeds of sacrifice, are perverted, thrown away unworthily, and made the servants of error in its war against truth. To sympathize with everybody's or anybody's dreams who may be applauded by the world because he is thought to be an opponent of the Church, is a moral cowardice, the existence of which proves that all within the body of the Church are not free from worldly fear and the base servitude of public opinion.

I say that there has been growing of late years in the Catholic body—and it is the danger of the times—a sympathy for the current errors of the day. The disease exists everywhere, and its marks are to be found in America as well as beyond the Atlantic. The errors of our day do not attack directly the prominent points of Catholic doctrine. Catholics are not exercised therefore immediately about their principles of faith themselves, or the clearly defined dogmas of revelation which they have been taught in their Catechism. It is rather on not yet defined points that we are loose. The field of battle is all that great border-ground lying between the domains of faith and of pure reason,—all that range of complex questions contained in philosophy, politics, history, science. For which cause it has been justly said that the contest between the Church and the world at the present day, between truth and error, is more philosophical than theological. Not that faith fears, or ought to fear, reason, since reason rightly exercised can never be opposed to faith. But it is the office of faith to prescribe the limits beyond which the investigations of reason cannot go. The more soundly reasonable a man will in truth be, the more willingly he will allow his mind to be directed in its researches by the guiding light of faith. But all men are not reasonable, and the spirit of our day is not a truly reasonable spirit: it will not submit to be controlled, and has proclaimed its emancipation from all subjection to any supernatural principle of belief; and herein lies the difficulty, hence comes the clash. The license of the mind which burst forth in Europe at the Protestant Reformation, has now swept over the earth like an ocean-current, and we are all in danger of being swallowed up in its devouring wave.

How are we to preserve ourselves from this misfortune? How are we to preserve ourselves from being infected with the disease of the times? How are we to enable ourselves to stand firm, soundly Catholic, bark and core, in the midst of an atmosphere where so many insidious evil influences are breathing on us from every side? By working at the root. "The beginning, the foundation, and the *root* of all our justification is *faith*," says the Council of Trent. It is because our faith is weak that our hearts are faint. Faith, a strong faith, is the remedy for all our infirmities. "This is the victory which overcomes the world," says the Apostle St. John, "our Faith." Had we the faith of our heroic ancestors, a spirit of opposition would spring up in our breast, not to that which is true and lawful, but to that which is wrong and false, against the present enemies approaching the ramparts of our religion. We would discover and recognize them from afar, we would discern their nature, their workings, and their purpose. For faith is a light. Not only is it "the evidence of things which are not seen," but it throws the light of its evidence on all things around it; and they who walk in the light of that faith will seldom be deceived in judging of and recognizing the true directions of the clouds of error which are blown across their path. And it is the "substance," that is, the solid assurance, "of things to be hoped for." Those whose hearts are filled with that assurance, so as really to value the things of this world as nothing compared to the future glory which awaits their hope, they will never cringe or fawn before mere human opinion, they will not blind their eyes or retreat before a principle of error: they will rather go forth to meet it at the outposts of their citadel of faith. They will not be the soldiers to allow that citadel itself to be endangered, or permit the walls of their hearts to be sapped by negligence or by conniving with the sentinels of the hostile army. With them war must be waged to the knife for every line of territory to which their sacred Faith has the right to prefer a claim.

But faith is also a gift of God, something not only to be cherished when possessed, but to be asked for that it may increase and grow in us. This we cannot do, at least earnestly, unless we appreciate it. No one will greatly desire, certainly cannot deserve to obtain, what he prizes little. If, then, yielding to the influence of the spirit of our age, all given over to sensible and material interests, we begin to neglect the things of God, we cease to appreciate our faith, or to care practically for it, what may we expect? Not only that faith will not grow in us, but that it will diminish, and perhaps altogether die out in our hearts, which would be the last of calamities. For sad indeed it would be for us, even in the natural order, if by our fault we were to lose that gift of faith, our one true consolation in the hour of sorrow, when false philosophy or the applause of the world can give but grim satisfaction, our one sweet drop in the cup of adversity, our one bright ray in the storm of affliction,—as it is the anchor of safety too in worldly success. Heroic deeds have been at times accomplished under the impulse of natural virtues, as friendship, filial piety, love of country; but the spring and principle of the most glorious feats of valor and endurance performed by human courage, have in all history been a great religious faith. To their faith St. Paul ascribes all the merits of the Saints of old. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained testimony that he was just. By faith Henoch was translated that he should not see death. . . . . By faith Noe, being divinely instructed, prepared an ark whereby he condemned the world, and was made heir of the justice which is by faith. By faith he who is called Abraham obeyed to go forth to the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, not knowing whither he was going; for he looked for the city of which God is architect and builder. Through faith also Sara herself, being barren got strength to conceive, even when she was past age. . . . . By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, his only-begotten. By faith also Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph. . . . . By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God than to have the pleasure of sin for a time, esteeming the reproach of the CHRIST greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians; for he looked to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of kings; for as seeing Him who is invisible he endured. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land. . . . . By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. . . . . But what more shall I say? . . . . of the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, grew strong from infirmity, were mighty in battle, put to flight the armies of strangers? Women received their dead restored to life: but some were tormented, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and stripes, moreover also chains and prisons. They were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the sword, wandering about in sheepskins, in goatskins, needy, straitened, afflicted; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, on mountains, and dens, and in caverns of the earth . . . . all these commended for their faith" (Heb. xi.).

Such were the saints of old, lauded by the Apostle for their faith. Imagine, if you can, such men as they compromising with the world: imagine them swerving from their principles of truth in order to gain the favor of men. How could they who "bore up with the Invisible One as though they saw Him," in whom faith had become an intimate portion of their very existence, who "lived by faith," for whom the things they knew by the light of revelation were more certain than the things they knew by the light of reason,—they who had set their affections, not upon the goods of this world, but upon a greater recompense for which they longed; how could they sacrifice the least probability made known to them by their light of faith, to please a world which they despised? they whose hearts were lifted up so high, and who yearned only for the day when the mists of earthly reason should be dispelled before the effulgence of light eternal in heaven? And after them came that swelling crowd of martyrs, virgins, saints of the Christian Church, who were sanctified by faith, little children, old men, and women, fortified till they became heroes by faith. All that is glorious in Christendom owes its existence to Catholic faith. By that faith the world was civilized, and taught that true refinement which co-exists only with Christian charity founded on Christian faith. By that faith Europe was made one great polity, its art and literature were developed; and by faith it was preserved from falling back into barbarism, when the Christian races of the West poured into the Holy Land to resist the approach of the coming torrent of Mohammedanism, and deliver from profanation the sepulchre of the Saviour of mankind.

We are the descendants of those races; we are the descendants of those forefathers. Transplanted to a new world, shall the faith which flourished in their hearts die out on a fresh soil? or shall it take new root and a more vigorous growth? By God's providence we hope it will. For why should it not? But then we must protect, fortify it in ourselves, and fence it round with a wall, that we may transmit it safely to our children. God had a vineyard, which He planted "with the choicest vines," "and He fenced it in and picked the stones out of it, and built a tower in the midst thereof." If we wish life to remain in our vine of faith, which will produce choice wine and fruit of virtue, we must carefully watch over it and guard it. Otherwise what was said of Jerusalem will become true of us: "And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Juda, judge between me and my vineyard. What is there that I ought to do now to my vineyard that I have not done to it? was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes? And now I will show you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted: I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will make it desolate: it shall not be pruned and it shall not be digged: but briers and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it." But let us value the gift of faith, that "gift of God, through" which "by grace, we are saved"; let us prize it, be jealous of it, proud of it, as our inheritance, the inheritance of centuries, as our greatest treasure, and then we shall not need to fear the seductions of error. Then it will suffice for us to know that our faith is in danger to be put on the alarm. We will not cry out *fire* only when our house is burning. We will not behave like those armies which neglect to throw out scouts, and wait till they are attacked in flank by enemies issuing from the woods. But acting unfearingly, consistently, distinguishing between the charity due to the erring and the hatred due to error, knowing that truth must finally prevail, loving the truth, God's truth, the truth only, the truth which will make us truly free, we shall prove ourselves true children of faith; not timid Christians—incompatible words!—not lovers of the world, but emulators of our Christian ancestors, who accept willingly all the legitimate conclusions of the principles in which they believe, and cling to the instincts which they generate, who serve God as their master, and rejoice the oftener they are able to make to Him the noblest sacrifice in their power, the submission of their reason and their heart. Our battle of today is not the same as when our fathers suffered for their religion, or rather it is the same battle, but under another form. "God does not ask of you blood," says St. Cyprian, in words we may apply to ourselves, "but faith." That faith will work the same results in us which it did in those who have gone before us, and by our fidelity to it we shall conquer the world; "this is the victory which hath overcome the world, your faith": we shall gain the respect of the very men of the world, we shall have done our part toward accomplishing the great duty of the conversion of this great land, and when our own course shall have been run, we will leave to our children the most precious legacy that parent can transmit to child, the incomparable jewel of Catholic faith.

Our divine Lord asked for this faith when He was on earth. "Do you believe?" He inquired of those who came to Him for miracles; "all things are possible to him who believes." "O ye of little faith, why do ye doubt?" But He foretold that there should come a time when the charity of men will grow cold because they shall have lost the faith, or faith shall have diminished in them. "The Son of Man when He cometh," says He, "shall He find, think you, faith on the earth?" We are approaching those times. Everything indicates it. Faith is disappearing from the earth. Nations that were renowned for their faith have lost it. It has been lost to Asia; it has been lost to Africa; it has been lost to Northern Europe. Now there is danger of a general defection from the faith. It is the danger of our future. And the danger is one that works insidiously. Those who still believe are walking over a ground all sapped and mined in every direction, where they can step never too carefully. For what has happened to the Christian nations of old may happen also to us. How indeed did those nations lose the faith? If we study the history of the early Christian Church, of the Protestant Reformation, of the infidelity which brought on the French Revolution, we shall find that the first drift in the way of ruin and shipwreck was the introduction of a false philosophy, of false theories, false systems, false social principles, contrary to the principles of faith,—a neglect to guard the outposts of the faith; and this at a time of much social corruption, of attachment to the earth, or at least to the things of the earth, to the comforts, pride, possessions, goods, vanities of this life, the love of the world;—we shall find that this was what brought on those generations that last terrible of chastisements, the loss of faith. And when was there ever, pray, so universal a deluge of false principles as at the present day? When was there ever so general an attachment to the goods of the earth as at the present time? The same dangers therefore await us as awaited those nations; not perhaps the nations as such, who have no longer any faith to lose, but the individuals and families. For the same dangers which exist for nations, exist for individuals and for families. God rewards and punishes families as He rewards and chastises nations. The individual Christian then who would preserve his faith and leave it as an heirloom to his children, must be careful and jealous of preserving it in himself in its integrity.

Let us therefore cling to our faith, and watch jealously over the approaches to our faith. Let us come out from the world. Let us walk in the midst of an unbelieving generation like Moses, who "esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians," because "he looked forward to the recompense." Everything passes away, my dear friends; empires pass away; we shall pass away;—faith itself shall disappear, but that will be when it shall have dissolved into the clear vision "face to face" of Him who is to be our great reward, the God in whom, and on whose word, we believe.

ON THE CHURCH AND THE AGE.

"Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."—MATTH. xvi. 18.

OURS is an age of incredulity,—not altogether as the last century, impious and scoffing,—but one rather of fair, open, candid unbelief. Its character is that of the age of the old Greek philosophers under the Roman Empire, when all systems of Idolatry and Philosophy having been tried and found wanting, there only remained a simple scepticism. The unbelief of the present day, though dignified and disguised by other titles, is also a simple religious scepticism, which explains nothing, and cannot be brought into consistency with any kind of fixed faith. Just as the essence of Protestantism, of which it is the last legitimate result, consisted in the mere negation of authority in the Church, so the essence of this Philosophy consists in the negation of certitude in Religion. Take up the writings of those who are considered the leaders and representatives of current thought: you will find them all, supposing, taking for granted, the non-existence of any *certain* religion. With a pretty fair statement of facts, so far as these are concerned, they discuss the rites, the observances, the conduct, of the ministers of the different forms of religious worship, but as from on high, with a peculiar lofty pretension of impartiality, and in that tone of speculative indifference which becomes minds elevated above the influences of popular credulity. These men do sometimes render us a service by their critical fidelity and research, but this only renders them the more dangerous, on account of the quiet assumption with which they explain away all facts, so as to render unnecessary faith in any dogmatic teaching.

To the educated classes especially; for the mind of intellectual persons is most exposed to the temptation of scepticism. "Knowledge inflates," says St. Paul: not only that, but knowledge, by sharpening the intelligence, by teaching not to receive all things on credit, begets a spirit of inquiry and examination, which we easily transfer to the spiritual order of things. Above all, half-knowledge is dangerous on this account; for to the half-instructed man many things suggest doubts, which, on account of his want of a complete comprehension of their nature and relations, he is unable to solve. Now as all men at the present day ar more or less half-educated, it is no wonder that the spirit of doubt as to any real dogmatic Christianity should be generally prevalent, and the simple denial of all positive religion have become the easy conclusion of all those souls which grace has not stirred up to the necessity of making sure their future salvation.

The world has decided accordingly that there is no certain *truth*. What must be its attitude then toward any institution which puts itself forward as the organ of THE TRUTH? One of hostility necessarily. Is there such an institution? There is;—the Church. The Church and the 19th century therefore are enemies. The world of to-day does not admit any Truth; it does not want any exponent of the Truth. The world and all that are of the world agree to say there is no *one* truth; and here is the Church which dares to declare that there is—but—one truth, and that is the doctrine she, alone, imparts. Therefore the world must hate the Church. For let the world put on what garb of impartiality it will, it knows that it and the Church are foes; and he who is the Prince of this world, above all knows that she is his foe, and destined to crush his head.

And yet when did the world ever stand in greater need of the Church? For to what are we tending? What is to be the end of all this unbelief? It is not difficult to foresee. "Coming events cast their shadows before." What is the state of society? is it settled? It is settled here, you will say. It is, because we have elbow-room, our country is not yet populated; but it will be populated rapidly; we are a fast people, and soon we shall have our problems to solve as well as civilized Europe. And what is the condition of that Europe, a condition in which we must participate to a certain degree? What social problems! Is democracy, or despotism, or anarchy, to reign? How is this struggle between king and people, between order and disorder, between the rich and the poor, between capital and labor, to end? This struggle, which began with Protestantism, is apparently drawing to its close, but a close which must first be determined as the result of a last terrific battle. What that result will be no prophet is necessary to foretell,—a despotism such as the world has never known till now. Will that be the rule of Anti-Christ? There is nothing absurd or improbable in the supposition. For in all probability it will be the reign of one who will be an enemy of Christ. The disparition of faith from the earth, the increasing hostility of the masses to necessary social order, the multiplication of infernal machines of war, the rapidity of intercommunication between all portions of the globe, seem to prognosticate that the time is not far distant when it will be in the power of one great conqueror to afflict and persecute all the members of the scattered and diminished Church.

This is all the more reasonable, because the problems exist, and they must be solved. A Napoleon, a Gladstone, a Bismarck, may put back the term of their solution: but the final trial must come. It will come for us, too, as well as for the old world. Look at our vast monopolies, our universal corruption, the power of some few, unprincipled men,—our furious passion for acquiring wealth. When the inexhaustible Chinee, mixing with the multiplied progeny of the taxed and impoverished white man, will have made of the laboring classes mere serfs of the soil, a fierce, unbelieving multitude,—nothing will keep them down but the iron hand of a cruel, heartless, and omnipotent despotism. But our glorious Constitution? our independent States? Talk of Constitution! talk of States! These States are legalizing divorce till the family in America is becoming only a name. The family, that most sacred word, without the existence of which no virtue, no stability is possible on earth! divorce, infanticide, the breaking up of home—to live in the impure atmosphere of hotels,—these are the characteristics of the family in America. And when the family has gone, what will become of the State?

No State can exist without religion. "He overturns the foundation of human society," says Plato, "who overturns religion." Men must worship, and if they will not worship God they will worship the Devil. As the world is drifting, we shall come to the time when, like the cultivated Egyptians and Romans of old, they will adore their king as god, and every brute beast. But let a State possess religion, let it be guided by religion, and it will be happy, prosperous, and progress under any form of government. Even if that religion be not the true one revealed by God, the more perfect it is, the less corrupted, the more near the true form revealed, or the more it retain of the original tradition handed down by the Fathers of the human race, the more sway will it have over men's minds, the more authority and power for good, the more it will prove itself to be a principle of preservation and of life. At the present day, however, when faith is disappearing, when men laugh at faith, when to believe is becoming the mark of a weak intellect still fettered by the ghosts of the chains of an obsolete superstition, a false worship, Protestantism, no longer affords a barrier to the downward march of thought. There remains no longer a choice possible but between no religion whatever and the true religion. There is no hope of salvation for society now but in a return to the true religion.

The true religion, the Church, can save society. She can do it. She has done so already. When the wild hordes of the North came down like the sweeping hurricane in succession and brought the enervated nations of the South to such low misery that order and law seemed to have disappeared from the earth, and chaos come back again, the Church taught virtue to the populations purified by misfortune, and, after converting their oppressors to the true faith, gradually established among them a social system which, with its defects, was the most perfect the world has yet witnessed. Kings, aristocracy, and people, were bound together, not by a bond of sentimental humanity, or of vague fraternity, or false equality, but by that Christian charity which teaches us to respect the rights of all, because all are brothers regenerated in the blood of the same Redeemer, called to the same light of truth, and united in the hope of one eternal happiness. The haughty emperors, the mailed barons, the sturdy citizens, and the contented peasants, all bowed in submission to one common Father, the director of their conscience and the arbiter of their quarrels, the august head of the great Christian Commonwealth. These times are gone, never to return again probably in any shape. But the vitality of the Church remains, her vitality which is powerful, not only to preserve her own life, but to infuse vigor and communicate bloom and health to all the members of her body. The days of feudal power, the days of kingly grandeur, the days of burgher influence, are gone perhaps forever, and may be destined to disappear from the globe. Let the democracies come; the Church does not fear them,—and they need not fear her; on the contrary, they should ask her to take them in her arms. For without her they will perish. Fire and the sword will waste them: they will disappear in anarchy and blood. When they shall obtain temporal prosperity, their corruption will become the basis of a throne of iron such as never blighted the growth of the nations of the East, and they will sink into a lethargy more ignominious than the humility of the Indian pariah or the stupor of the Mohammedan slave. But let them submit to the Church. The Church which gave civilization to the German barbarians, and led their oppressed serfs to liberty and civil progress, will perfect and preserve their institutions, will assure them their necessary element of stability, and, by teaching Christian morality to all the members of the Commonwealth, obtain, with civil liberty and equality, that social harmony and peace without which no form of government can give happiness to those subject to its jurisdiction.

And the Church will save this land. This land which is developing with so many elements of destruction, the Church alone can save from ruin. This land which the turbid passions of lust and avarice and selfishness, in all its forms, are dragging to the precipice, as certainly as the rapid waters of Niagara are being hurried to their fall,—the Church alone can save it. And she will do so, if allowed. The spirit of the Catholic Church will solve the problem between capital and labor. It will put bounds to the desire of accumulating wealth. It will give strength to central authority in the affections of the people, it will supply the absence of the conservative influence of an hereditary aristocracy, and preserve the mutual independence of the States, while directing their common progress and prosperity. Because her mission is to teach *all* truth, and not only she teaches, but by the virtue communicated to her from above, by the power of her principles where accepted, even over the minds of the wicked, she alone is able to obtain the accomplishment of all created duties. She alone can found that justice which "raises nations up," and without which they fall into sin, which "makes the peoples miserable."

But this must be on the condition that her own children continue warm in their devotion to her. For if they already begin to grow cold in their affection,—if they, weak in faith, begin to fail to believe in her promises, because they hear the murmur of her enemies against her—if they, who ought to resent every insult offered to her person as an injury committed against themselves,—if they begin to make themselves the feeble echoes of an unholy public opinion which is hostile to her cause, to be the faint applauders of those who howl and shout against her holy law,—if, in the desire to find peace in this world, where there is to be no peace for the Christian, who, by the oil of Confirmation, was anointed, that he might fight all the days of his life against a world enemy to Christ,—if, in the desire to make peace with the world, they lay down their arms, that is to say, their constant, undying protestation in defense of truth, and wish at least to compromise with error;—ah! then, woe to this country and to the growing American Church! That Church which has increased and spread with a rapidity equalled only by the giant strides of the Republic itself, already has a cankerworm within it which will eat away its beauty and its substance, and, what has not been heard of in history before, it will rot and wither before coming to its maturity, and this fair vast land will be delivered up by God to the empire of the devil.

It is said that the Church is opposed to progress, to civilization and enlightenment; that she is narrow and intolerant; not only behind the age, but a drag upon the age; that she has often shown herself mistaken; that she has often proved herself to be in the wrong; that she would prevent civil society from expanding to its proper natural development, by keeping the human mind in leading-strings, and Catholic nations are pointed out as a proof and illustration of the fact. The Church is not opposed to true progress,—to true civilization. She is opposed to no *truth:* how could she be? she teaches *all* truth. The confirmation of her authority assures us that we are not mistaken even in the acceptance of those truths, the knowledge of which may be acquired by reason. What she is opposed to is error. She has no enemy but error. She never made war but on error. She gave true liberty and education and progress to the crushed world before the dreamy humanitarian theories of our day were known. It is false to say that she was ever narrow-minded, cruel, grasping. The authenticated facts of history are to the contrary. If ever Catholic nations have done wrong, it was when they acted in contradiction to her spirit and her direction. They were all great and grand while they obeyed her laws; they all began to decay and perish from the day they commenced to revolt against her rule and throw off her gentle yoke. And all she wants to-day is true liberty, true progress, true enlightenment. She cannot yield one line of principle, but everything that is not opposed to truth in itself she will sanctify. Give her a democracy, a universal democracy, if you like—not that she is bound to admit that to be the best form of government—but give it to her *with religion*, and she will accept it. But what she will not accept, and what we cannot accept, is, society without religion, indifference as to religion—and as to the *true* religion, the equality before God and conscience of all religions, the negation of a true and one only saving religion, democracy without religion, education, commerce, science, progress, without religion, the theory that government, where it can be done, is not obliged to take into consideration the interests of men's souls—that it is not obliged to protect, to promote the true faith, that, in the normal condition of things, the truth of Jesus Christ, the religion of Jesus Christ, the Church of Jesus Christ, should not be the truth, the religion, the church of the State as well as of the people. All this the Church will not admit, nor can we, as Catholics, admit. What we as Catholics cannot admit, is, that the State can get on very well without the Church, that the best thing for the Church now to do is to hold her peace, and allow the State or civil society to do as it pleases without protest on her part—that, in order to have peace and be on an equality with our enlightened neighbors, we, the children of the Church, should praise and extol the liberal principles of the day,—that is, the unrestricted liberty of everything that is immoral and untrue, the equal liberty of wrong as well as of right: all this, I say, as Catholics, we cannot admit; if we do, in so far, we are Catholics in name and not in fact. The Church does not change. "Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same forever." The Catholic of the 19th century believes what the Catholic of the 13th century believed, and what the Catholic of the third and first believed, and for which he died. We are not going to enlighten the Church, but we all stand in great need that the Church should enlighten us. And so does the age: but the age refuses to be enlightened by the Church, and therefore they are at war. For the duty of the Church is to direct the age, though this age refuses to be directed by her. The duty of the Church is to condemn error—of every kind: but this age clings to error, more even than to truth. The duty of the

Church is to give light to her children, that they may know what is right and what is wrong: and this age prefers darkness. Even as our Lord was in the world, and the world knew Him not, He was "the light shining in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend Him": so the men of this age revolt against the Church's teaching us that truth which alone will make us free, because they prefer the liberty of accepting, keeping, living in error and deceit.

Let us not, my dear brethren, join in this revolt,—from any motive or to any degree,—not even in the sympathies of our heart, or the fancies of our imagination, lest one day we be condemned like the Jews, of whom it is said that they would not hear the words of Jesus Christ, because they loved more the glory of men than the glory of God. Rather, in order that the Church of Christ may accomplish its destiny of regenerating human society,—in order that it may accomplish the great work of converting this fair land,—let us strengthen our devotion to the Church. Let us love our holy mother the Church; we owe everything to the Church. Let us not fear that the words of Christ's promise shall ever fail. The gates of hell have never prevailed, and never shall prevail, against His Church. She has never gone astray on a single doctrinal point: her enemies may be challenged to prove that she has ever erred in any point of practical justice or prudence. Her children may have done wrong; individual ministers in their individual capacity may have done wrong; but the Bride of Christ has preserved unstained during nineteen centuries that white robe which He gave to her that she might be "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." She has never been unfaithful to His truth or to His cause, and, by the virtue of His power, she will purify again this earth, on which it is her lot to lead a life of ever-varying trial and combat. Let us ask to be made worthy children of that Church militant and struggling, in order that, having done our part of duty in her warfare with the world, we may merit to be enrolled among the glorious members of a Church which is triumphing in heaven.

ON THE SUPERNATURAL ORDER.

"To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God."—ACTS i. 3.

WHAT was this kingdom of God, of which our Lord entertained His disciples during the forty days He spent with them between His glorious resurrection and His ascension into heaven. "The kingdom of God is within you," He had said when preaching in Galilee before His passion. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation"; it is not something external, a thing that makes a show in the world, but something hidden in the heart of man. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," wrote the Apostle St. Paul to the Romans, "but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." So that what our Lord meant by the expression "the kingdom of God," was the possession of the virtue and graces of the Holy Ghost in our hearts. He dwelt upon this point in speaking to and instructing His apostles after His resurrection, because they were still carnal-minded and had not yet understood those words which He addressed to Pontius Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: for this was I born . . . . that I might give testimony unto the truth"; so much so that, when even on their way to witness His ascension into heaven, they asked Him, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" So impressed were they with the common Jewish opinion that the Messiah was to restore temporal prosperity and glory to the Jewish people.

The error of the apostles was an error very natural to men. Nearly nineteen centuries have elapsed since their time, and it is still hard for human nature, for flesh and blood, to understand that the kingdom of God does not consist in worldly prosperity, but in something hidden to the world, the inner workings in the Christian soul of God's divine and invisible Spirit. And after eighteen centuries that Christianity has existed in the world, the opinions of men have not changed in this respect. They still wish to believe that virtue is to be recompensed in this life, and that indeed the virtue which is pleasing to God is the mere observance of that natural law which was known even to the Pagans, not the practice of those heroic precepts revealed by the author of the Christian religion in His instructions to His followers. And they are scandalized, as much as the Jews or the Gentiles were, at the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,"—are words they cannot comprehend. How, the poor, the illiterate, the unpolished, the lower classes, as they are called, the peasants, are to be preferred before the gentlemen and ladies, before the men of science, the intellects of the 19th century? "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," and "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." What, in order to be saved, in order to become a person of any value in the sight of God, it is necessary in this age of free thought, of progress, of enlightenment, of science, of independence of action, of diffusion of knowledge and education, to make ourselves as little children! to grow backwards! to humble ourselves—! Yes: to humble ourselves; for without Christian humility, no man shall be saved. Unless a man possess in some degree that Christian humility which is the very antipode of the spirit of this age in which we live, he will never possess or keep the grace of God, and without the grace of God salvation is impossible. I say, without the grace of God salvation is impossible. For, according to Catholic doctrine, man has been elevated to an end superior to that for which he is naturally adapted. To fit him for this end, God infuses into his soul supernatural and habitual grace, without the presence of which grace it is absolutely impossible for him ever to see God as he will now be one day called to do. This grace is a purely divine gift, by which we are made partakers, inasmuch as mere creatures can become so, of the intimate nature of God Himself as He exists in three Persons, and is the foundation and support of all the other supernatural gifts, the trunk, so to say, of which they are the branches, as faith, hope, and charity, the supernatural moral virtues, and what are called the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This grace was lost by Adam to his posterity, and we receive it individually in Baptism. It is lost again by mortal sin, and recovered by sincere contrition, and the sacrament of penance. And now that man has been elevated to so sublime a vocation, he can no longer attain even that natural felicity which would have been otherwise the final end of his existence, unless he die in the possession of supernatural grace and virtue. For the natural end of man has been swallowed up and absorbed in the higher glory to which he has been called, so that it has been made an obligation incumbent on all men to tend to supernatural happiness, and he who fails to do so forfeits all right to hope for a blissful existence in the life which is to be hereafter.

This is the Catholic doctrine. But it is far from being universally admitted. The two camps which existed at the time our Lord was on earth, exist at the present day, and perhaps the division between them is more marked than ever. The Catholic Church speaks with the same voice and in the same words which her divine founder used. Outside of the Catholic Church, there are still some few organs which try to echo feebly the same sounds: but the great mass of all those out of the Roman Catholic communion at the present time, whether they be the enlightened pagans of China and India, or the Protestants of England and the United States, or the infidels of France and Germany, all agree in rejecting any other order of things but the mere natural order, any other religion binding on men but that made known by the voice of nature. The world denies the supernatural state: the Church affirms it. It is not at all surprising that we should have come to this. The world, which wishes to enjoy this life, which wishes to receive its meed of reward for whatever good works it does in this life, which does not understand, nor wish to understand, anything about austerity, humility, self-denial, good deeds done in secret in order to obtain an invisible recompense,—this world naturally revolts against the assertion of the existence of an order of things which contradicts all its own notions. For what follows from the admission of a supernatural state? It follows that the world is all wrong. The *ens supernaturale*, or the supernatural being in man, is something altogether distinct from our natural being; it is an incomprehensibly different kind of being, of which one of the most essential elements is that it should be invisible, unseen, intangible, something to be believed, not known by any operation of sense or perception of reason. It is therefore something which has nothing in common with nature or the world. Quite the contrary, as its being, so its ends and operations are opposed to those of nature and the world. Nature desires sensual satisfaction; the world lives in the pleasure of ostentatious vanity: nature has for its object, self; the world is all in a round of empty show; nature does not act from principle or reason, but according to the impulses which spring from man's unreflecting instincts, many of which are not superior to those of irrational animals; the world is swept on by a dizzying wind of frivolity, ambition, and pride, which puffs it up with reeling self-complacency, till it is ready, as it were, to burst through swollen admiration of its own imaginary greatness. The more a man leads a natural life, the more he leads a selfish life; and the more a man leads a worldly life, the more he leads a vain and foolish life. For nature is all self-love, and the world is all a vanity-fair. There is no truth in it; affectation is the essence of its being; and, when the conceit of the fleeting hour is spent, it has nothing to give its followers but the empty recollection of an empty pageantry, of lying flattery and heartless dissipation. No wonder that this world and this nature should resent the intruding presence of the supernatural and true. No wonder that they should join in seeking to chase it from their sight, and destroying, or denying, its existence. What is it doing, with its pale, rugged face, and its plain, homely dress, in the distinguished presence of the world and nature? Let it move out of the way with its beggarly manners and uncouth appearance and superstitious practices, and no longer obstruct the path of progress of an enlightened age, which has to travel round the globe in hotel-carriages and drawing-room cars, and plant its boulevards and camps of industrial exposition in Pekin and Constantinople; because the grand era of universal peace and brotherhood has come, when man fights no longer with his brother-man, not Prussian with Frenchman in deadly combat, nor Parisian with Provincial, nor American with American, nor the poor against the rich, but, in the light of modern science and of universal education, the human race, disenthralled from all superstition, and now proved to have probably descended from an ape, will regenerate itself indefinitely, abandoning antiquated religious speculations to study positive facts, and leaving to every man, with that liberality which becomes a cultivated period, the right to think what he pleases about the existence of a God, and, if he is pleased with that hypothesis, to serve that God or not to serve Him according as he likes, provided he allows his neighbors to do the same,—and only declaring war, but that unrelenting and to the knife, against ignorance, superstition, fanaticism, and the obsolete assumptions of authority of any dogmatizing church.

Positivism, which, we are told, is to be the religion of the future, and of which M. Auguste Comte has the credit of being the founder, though it existed thousands of years before him, and is only a new name for an old thing,—expresses well the practical state of mind of a vast number of men now living in the world outside of the Catholic Church. This Positivism is the most unpositive thing on earth. The Positivist admits facts only, that is, sensible facts: what is suprasensible, he says nothing about. Does a God exist? I don't say yes, he answers; I don't say no; I don't know. This is not a very philosophical way of talking, you will say. But they pretend that Positivism is an improvement on philosophy. I can understand that it is, if it denotes the mental condition, not of a man who has chosen to exist in a state of stupid scepticism, but of one who acknowledges that he has not yet received that light to his intellect which will enable him to give a certain answer on the grave questions which he feels called upon to solve. Such a man, if he is honest, and not the slave of pride, will come to the knowledge of the truth. But at the present day, there are thousands of men who practically do not know whether there is a God or not, simply because they do not care. Whether there be a true religion on earth or not, they do not know, because they have never inquired about it. These are the men who are liberal in their notions, and they have a right to be; what else would they be? Since they do not know and do not care what is true or the truth, why should they worry their neighbor about what he thinks or how he acts? Such men as these are easily carried away by the cant words of the time, words having a very great sound and a very empty sense, because the way of speaking of the time exactly coincides with their disposition of mind. What more convenient, what less troublesome, than to speak glibly of the progress of our century, liberty, liberality, enlightenment, civilization, education, superstition, ultramontanism, fanaticism, bigotry, educating the people, the light of science, freedom of the press, democratic institutions, etc., etc.? This dialect of the English language is very easily acquired. You have only to read any one of our daily papers attentively for a week or two to learn the whole of it. No matter whether you altogether understand what you are saying, or sometimes jumble together contradictory assertions, it will do very well for talk—and talk is all that the world cares for.

But the kingdom of God is not in talk, or "in speech, but in power," "and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness" (1 Cor. iv. 20; 1 Thess. i. 15). We shall not be saved by any loose kind of thought, or any loose kind of conversation on all important subjects; we shall be saved only by the virtue of the power of the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost, who is the principle of the supernatural life in man, will not compromise or come to an understanding with the world and nature. His lessons to the Christian soul are directly contradictory to those of nature and the world. They say there is no higher order than that naturally known by his reason to man on earth: the Divine Spirit affirms that there is a higher order, and that the whole natural order must, if occasion requires, be sacrificed to the supernatural welfare of the soul. The world and nature not only are averse to, but violently repugn against any kind of mortification of the senses or the will of man: the Holy Ghost declares that the Christian's whole life on earth must be one of constant self-denial, submission, and sacrifice. The world and nature want pleasure, the pleasure of indolence, the pleasure of flattery, the pleasure of many friends, of state, of office, of the first places; the Holy Ghost declares that the Christian's duty is to carry his cross in this life, that life is a serious thing, that death is the time for rendering our account, that on this earth we have to suffer in order to enjoy in heaven a recompense which shall be eternal. The world and nature do not wish to be controlled; they wish to think for themselves and to judge for themselves and to speak for themselves, on all subjects, though the truth is that those who are their votaries are the drag-slaves of public opinion, and the blind followers of the blind. The Spirit of God says that there is but one truth; that what men should wish is, not to be independent of direction, but to know the truth, honestly to seek nothing but the truth, the truth in natural science and in social problems, and the truth in religious inquiry, in order to accept, embrace, and execute the mandates of Truth. The Spirit of God says that as there is a supernatural order, above the visible things of this world, it is to be prized incomparably beyond all the things of this world; that education, science, knowledge, liberty, no more than wealth, health, beauty, talent, are not to be valued or estimated as anything in comparison to the possession of the vivifying grace of God in our souls. If education, progress, liberty, were only to make man proud and vain and withdraw him from God, then perish progress, liberty, and knowledge, rather than we should lose the knowledge of the things of God. If material prosperity, if worldly comfort, only tend to absorb man's thoughts in the things of this earth, so that he may have no time or wish to occupy himself about the things of heaven, then were it better for man if he never prospered, and if he never knew comfort on this earth, but tried to love his God and merit happiness in a world to come.

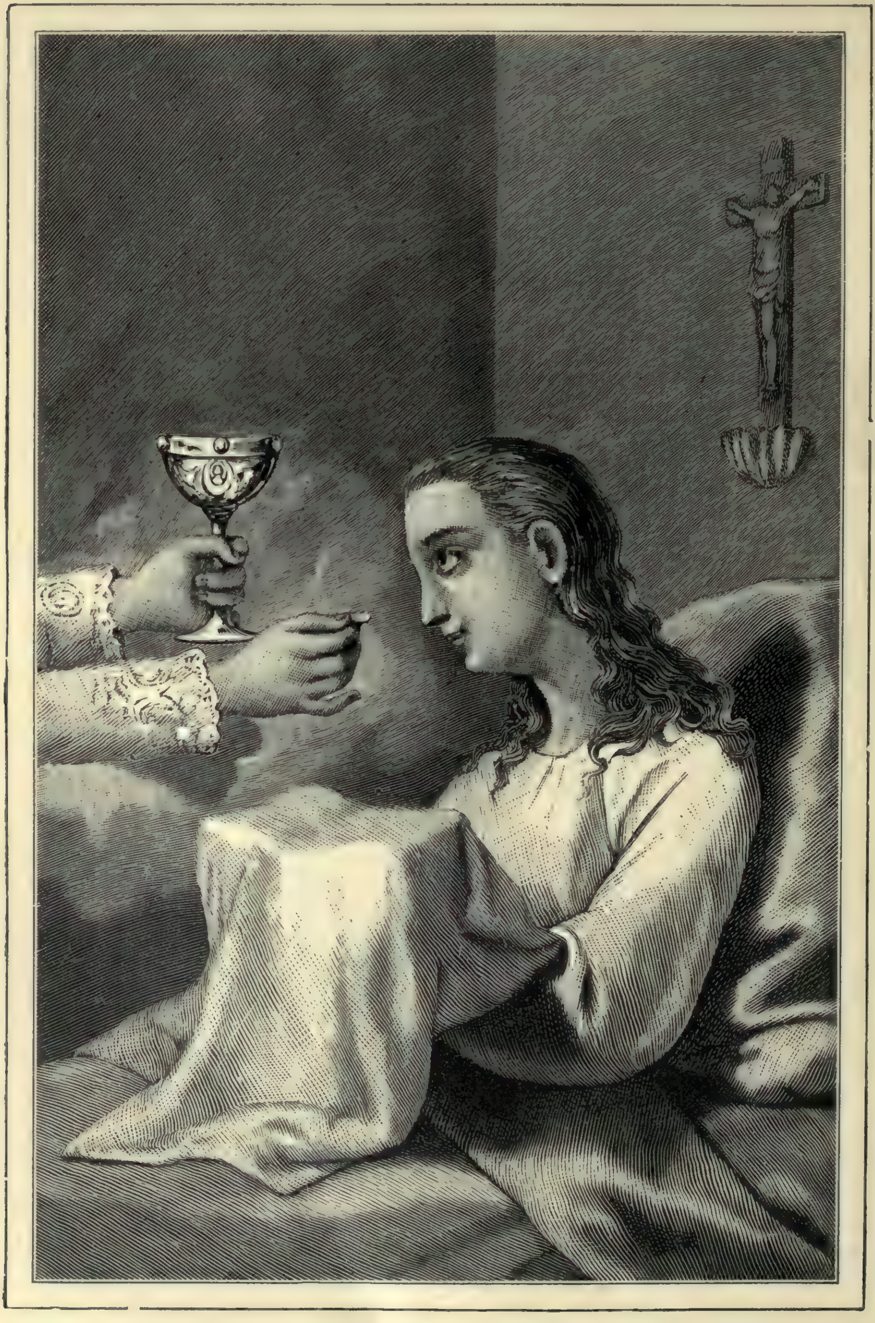
You see that here are two very different points of view of the same thing. The Holy Ghost considers only the supernatural end of man, and wishes that everything should be directed to that end. The world does not look, and does not care to look, beyond man's merely natural condition. It is clear that there can never be any agreement between the world and the Holy Ghost. What then is the best thing for the world to do? Why, to deny the existence of this supernatural state in man altogether. And so it has done. So it is that how many persons will you find outside of the Catholic Church to-day who believe firmly in the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the eternity of hell (or of heaven itself, for the matter of that), in the truth of any certain revealed religion, in the necessity of baptism? And this belief in the necessity of baptism is the best criterion by which to judge of the reality of a belief in the supernatural state, since it is by baptism that we receive the Holy Ghost within our souls and the Holy Trinity, that we become children of God and co-heirs of Jesus Christ to the kingdom of heaven. Now how many persons are baptized at the present day, in the length and breadth of this great land, to speak of no other, outside of the Catholic Church? How many Protestant ministers believe in the necessity of baptism? The Ritualists do: they are able to believe in anything: they believe that they are priests. But the great bulk of the American people have practically discarded all credence in the presence of any higher principle in the soul of man than that which he received by the operation of the law of his creation, in the pure order of nature.

What then must be the moral condition of this atmosphere of naturalism, by which we are on all sides surrounded? Is it a healthy one for us to breathe? And if not, what preventative measures ought we to adopt, what antidotes should we make use of, to preserve its poisonous vapors from affecting our own vital organs, and impairing the integrity of our life of faith? What we have to do is, to ground ourselves well in our principles of faith, in the firm belief in the truth of this supernatural life, which results from the presence of divine grace and charity in the soul of man, which is as superior to all other things in our natural state on earth as it is distinct from them, and without which it is impossible to be saved. What we have to do is, to prize above all things that life of grace, which alone is truly prize-worthy, which alone is valuable, which alone is a truly precious possession, since all things else pass away, and it alone contains the germ of immortality. This is a kind of language to which the world, as I have already said, is, of course, unwilling to listen. How indeed could the world believe that those ignorant peasants, who only know how to mutter their beads, who cannot read, who are as far behind and ignorant of the enlightenment of this age as the serfs and villeins of the 9th and 10th centuries, are to be preferred before the educated, the learned, the fashionable people of our cultivated period? Yet so it must be, if what we hold is true, and they possess the grace of God. And so it is. Dives was an educated and very polite man; he entertained his friends well at his table, and talked very fluently the current talk of the Roman Empire in his day. And Lazarus was a beggar, who sat at Dives' door, eating crumbs, and it is very probable that Lazarus was not a very nice sort of object to look at; he could not read nor write, he knew nothing about politics, nothing about the price of gold, and nothing about the fashions. Yet Lazarus is in heaven, and Dives is in hell,—because Lazarus had in his soul the sanctifying grace of God, and Dives had not. Whosoever dies with sanctifying grace in his heart will go certainly to heaven, and whosoever dies without sanctifying grace in his heart will certainly go to hell. Here is a respectable citizen of New York: he is a most worthy man in every respect, so far as human reason can discern. He is an upright man, fair and honest in his dealings, liberal and generous in his views, kind-hearted, charitable, and philanthropical; he is a refined gentleman in his tastes, a man addicted to no particular kind of vice, a good neighbor, a valuable friend, a man of great enterprise, a public benefactor, in fine. He lives and dies without the grace of God. My dear friends, he will go to hell. Here is a fine lady, educated in some superior establishment, who has travelled in

Europe, who possesses every accomplishment, a model of grace, and a woman of talent, too, a very charitable person likewise, who labors for the poor, whose name is on the list among those at the head of every good work undertaken for the relief of the innumerable forms of human suffering. She too dies without the grace of God, and she will go to hell. All her charities, all her graces, all her gifts and talents, will avail her nothing, will be all spent, wasted, lost, since she will not have attained the one thing necessary—salvation. And what will have been their value in the end? as "what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" What will it avail these persons to have been rich, honored, to have had talents, to have received a superior education, to have lived in an enlightened age, to have talked or to have spoken, or to have written finely about progress, science, improvement,—if such is to be their end? This is why we place the supernatural element higher in our estimation than everything in the natural order. Do we therefore despise or undervalue what is good in the natural order of things? are we opposed to the improvement of the human race? Not at all: but we wish everything to hold its right place in Christian opinion, and if the poor and illiterate, according to those words of our Lord, "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones," know more about the things of heaven than those who are more instructed otherwise and more favored with those gifts which are esteemed by this world,—why, then, we say: Blessed are the poor and blessed the illiterate, since God has revealed to their humility and littleness what He has hidden from the wise and prudent of the world. Let us therefore respect and honor those natural virtues and qualities which are God's gift also, but in a lower sphere, talent, amiability, education, knowledge of every kind; but let us value more, incomparably more—the least degree of that supernatural grace which is the seed of heavenly glory, which alone makes us worthy of God's love and to be called His children, and which is given only to the little and humble of heart, and not to such as "mind high things," and "are wise in their own conceits." And during this period when we are approaching the feast which is the anniversary of the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles to fill them with divine grace and strength, let us endeavor and prepare to deserve ourselves an augmentation of that supernatural life within us from the Holy Spirit of God, by increasing our esteem for it, by prizing more than ever, as the greatest treasure we possess, the life of supernatural virtue in our soul. Thus we shall be disposed to profit by those days of grace which God grants to us, that His Divine Spirit may be able to renew annually in our hearts the wonders of mercy which He operated in the early Christians; we shall advance in that life of faith, hope, and charity, which is the complement and perfection of all those benefits and advantages which we have received in the natural order; and, with our increase in divine charity and virtue, we shall accumulate merits for that eternal life where grace shall be turned into glory, and faith in things invisible shall be changed into the clear vision of the God who is to be our great reward and the object of our never-ending happiness.

REVEREND JOSEPH FARRELL.

Reverend Joseph Farrell was ordained priest in 1865, and became a Professor in Carlow College, Ireland, where he remained until 1868. His Reverence died in the year 1885, in his 44th year.



The Holy Viaticum.

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

"Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you."—
MATT. ii. 28.

GOD, my brethren, has employed two men to sing for every age, and with a voice that finds an echo in every human heart, the psalm of human misery. Job, the most afflicted of the sons of men, and Solomon, lifted above them all by the greatness of his prosperity, both have touched, and with inspired hands, the mystery of human sorrow. This is, as it were, the key of all the history of God's dealings with His creature man, the foundation-stone of all Revelation, both pre-Christian and Christian, that the state of man, being a state of fall from some original high degree of privilege and perfection, is, consequently, a state of which misery and sorrow are the inevitable conditions. The whole teaching of history—of profane history quite as much as of sacred—goes to prove that, in the words of Job, "Man is filled with many miseries," and in the words of Solomon, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Hence it is not wonderful that the Saviour of the world, who came as the representative before His eternal Father of the human race, should have been known to the prophets, who saw Him from afar, as He who was to be emphatically "the man of sorrows"; and not wonderful that, when He did come, He came poor and mean and abject, attracting to Himself, as if by the intense sympathy for humanity that filled His Sacred Heart, every sorrow that could crown, as with a crown of thorns, a human life. See if it were not so. For, mark you this, He might have appeared on earth a full-grown man; but no—by doing so He would have spared Himself a pang that was the keenest of the tortures of His Passion, for then His dying eyes would have seen no mother's heart pierced through and through by a sword of sorrow. He might have lived alone, gathering around Him no band of disciples to share His deepest thoughts, and know Him as friends and brothers know a brother and a friend: but then Judas could never have betrayed Him, the taint of a traitor's kiss could never have been laid upon His sacred lips, the bitter memory of a traitor's malice would have been wanting to the chalice of His agony. He was emphatically the Man of sorrows, and He sought for sorrows.

Our Lord did not by His coming, did not even by His Passion, at once restore man to the original perfection from which he had fallen. Because man had fallen He came to redeem Him; but not the less because of Redemption is the Fall the foundation-stone of Christianity. As man's free will had brought about the Fall, so God deigned to reconsecrate that will by exacting from it a co-operation in the work of Redemption. Hence man, even after the coming of our Blessed Lord, is still fallen man; and even when the original sin that was the prime evil of the Fall has been removed by a man's absorption to the body of Christ, which is the Church, he still retains a corrupt nature, prone to sin, and subject to sorrow. And hence it is that, even to those who have participated in the fruits of the Redemption, even to them descends the ancient heritage of sorrow; and they, too, can take up the inspired books of Solomon and Job, and find in them, as if spoken for themselves, those unuttered and unutterable thoughts that have weighed so heavily on two hundred generations of human hearts. Even to His Apostles Jesus would promise only the hatred of the world, sufferings, persecution, death.

You will ask me, then, What has Jesus done, if, even to those who follow Him, He has left the legacy of sorrow—in what respect are His followers the better of His coming? My brethren, only He could say, and He has said it—"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." And how? Let me first ask, and answer, the question, How were His sorrows turned into the joy of Redemption? All Christianity answers—by His Passion and death. Here, then, we have the answer to the former question, for He Himself has given it by the institution of the Blessed Eucharist; for, in the words of St. Paul, "as often as you eat of this bread, and drink of this chalice, you shall show forth the death of the Lord until He come." Until He come! Yes, ye followers of Christ; though the streets of Jerusalem and the shores of Tiberias shall know Him in the flesh no more; though the clouds of Olivet have hidden away from the eyes of men the glory of His transfigured face; though many a weary day and many a desolate night must pass over humanity till the brightness of His Second Coming shall shine above the Valley of Judgment; though sorrow still shall be, as it has ever been, a familiar presence by mortal firesides, the one unbidden but inevitable guest in every home and in every heart; yet for you remains the blessed promise, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy"; because Jesus shall still be with you in this memorial of His Passion, and ever, in the darkest hour, shall you find in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist Him who said, and has never ceased to say, "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you."

Is it wonderful, then, that the Church to-day should interrupt her mourning, and turn to the gaze of her children the silver lining of the cloud that this week of awful memories has flung upon her temples and her altars?

We shall, then, briefly consider the Blessed Eucharist, both in its promise and its institution, and shall endeavor to dwell specially upon such points of the history of this holy sacrament, as will be specially calculated to awaken in us those sentiments of love toward our Blessed Lord, which this sacrament was meant to kindle and to keep alive.

One day our Blessed Lord sate teaching in the synagogue of Capharnaum. It was a special occasion, and an unusually large multitude thronged to hear Him—a special occasion, for, only the day before He had performed a miracle, which gave rise, even in the minds of the most careless, to perplexing thoughts as to what manner of man this could be who exercised such power over the seemingly inflexible laws of the material world. With five barley-loaves and two fishes He had satisfied the hunger of five thousand persons, and many of those who had witnessed the miracle, felt a natural desire to gather up and treasure in their hearts, every word that fell from the sacred lips of Him, who exercised such power and manifested such compassion.

It is the way of God, my brethren, always to make one favor a preparation for a higher one. The more God does for any one, the more on that account may we expect Him to do. It is, as I say, the way of God. If the silent footsteps of the dawn be on the mountain-tops, they are but hastening to flood the world with the brightness of the noonday splendor. If the tree be fair its beauty bursts into a blossom, and when the blossom has spent its loveliness it but gives place to the ripening fruit. If God has given us a body fashioned to its every purpose with marvellous skill, it was that He might breathe into it an immortal soul stamped with His living image; and if that soul be endowed with wondrous gifts, it is only that with far-reaching desires it may stretch into the infinite, and find its last end and its everlasting happiness in nothing lower or less perfect than God Himself. And so, on this occasion, if Jesus had miraculously fed five thousand with five loaves, it was that the miracle might be the guarantee of the truth of the promise of an infinitely higher gift, and be the shadow—stupendous though it was, still but the shadow—of that unceasing miracle by which He feeds and shall feed all the generations of His Church with the sacred bread that cometh down from heaven, and remains with the children of men in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Accordingly, He begins to speak to them of some mysterious bread which He had it in purpose to give them, a bread that was meant—not to sustain the life of the body, which must one day end, but a bread that would confer a life that could never perish. And when He had raised their expectations and their eagerness to the highest pitch, He exclaimed, with what must have seemed to many there a startling abruptness, "*I* am the living bread that came down from heaven." My brethren, the miracle He had so lately wrought had surely given Him a right to have His assertion believed, but the Jews laughed Him to scorn—they had their own theory about Him—they grew indignant, and they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" And what has Jesus to reply? Does He hasten to explain away His words to satisfy them? On the contrary, He repeats His assertion still more emphatically —"I am the living bread that came down from heaven: if any man shall eat this bread he shall live forever." Ah, but He says more—says a thing still more calculated to try their faith—"The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." That they clearly understood Him to mean literally what He said is manifest from the fact that they never questioned His meaning, but set themselves at once to dispute His power. "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, how can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Surely if they had mistaken His meaning it was His duty to have corrected the mistake. But they had not mistaken His meaning; they had doubted His power, as heretics have been doing ever since; and as the Church has always answered heretics, so He answered the Jews, by placing under the sanction of a threat the doctrine which He had previously taught as a blessed promise. "Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." Some of those who had been His disciples walked with Him no more, as heretics have been doing ever since they had been believing, not in Him, but in their own judgment about Him, and when their judgment was offended their faith was gone. Jesus turned to His Apostles, and asked them, "Will you also go away?" and St. Peter, as if in anticipation of the papal authority and infallibility which he and his successors were afterward to enjoy, gave an answer that makes faith in the Holy Eucharist at once supremely easy and supereminently rational —"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Nor do we, my brethren, know any one to whom we shall go, no other than Jesus, speaking through Peter and His Church, and declaring, in words that stand forever against the doubt of the heretic and the scoff of the unbeliever, that "His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed."

And time passed on—a time marked by the teaching, and preaching, and miracles of our Lord. He never again made allusion to this promise. It lay in the depths of His loving heart, waiting for a time when its fulfilment would gather around itself every circumstance that would be calculated to make it memorable forever. The time came when the clouds of the coming Passion began to gather deep and dark about our Blessed Lord. Accordingly, in the room of the Last Supper, we read that "Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said, Take ye and eat, this is my body: and taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many to the remission of sins."

My brethren, having uttered these sacred and memorable words I shall not stay to dwell upon them, and for this reason—I should fear to spoil by a single word of comment the sublime simplicity of words that were formed in the loving heart and uttered by the sacred lips of Jesus Christ Himself. He would not, He could not juggle with the meaning of human words, or with the understanding of His creatures, and anything like discussion on the matter, after Jesus has spoken, must have as its basis that blasphemous question of those at Capharnaum, the first heretics on the subject of the Blessed Eucharist—"How *can* this man give us his flesh to eat?" When God, when the Son of God speaks, let even human reason decide, whether it is for us to reverently accept His words, or begin to put limits of our own to the Divine omnipotence. It is enough for us that Jesus has said it. I therefore believe it, and you believe it, as firmly as we believe in the existence of God or of ourselves; and on this belief both you and I are ready to stake our hopes of heaven, our immortal souls.

I shall pass, then, to those other words, spoken on the same occasion, and which the eye of faith sees written above every altar where Mass has since been said. When our Lord had completed the solemn act of consecration, He said to His disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me." He was about to die. The powers of earth and hell were about to have their triumph for the time—the Shepherd was to be stricken, and the flock dispersed. I ask you, my brethren—nay, I would even ask, if such were present, those who do not believe at all in the divinity of Jesus Christ—was it not amongst the sublimest sayings that the world has treasured in its memory? A Man who had come to the very brink of the grave, who was already looking over into the abyss of death, spends the last free hour His enemies will leave Him in the endeavor to make the memory of Him as lasting as the world itself. For I ask again, is it not a fact, patent to all men, whether they believe in His divinity or not, whether they be Catholics or not, is it not a simple fact, that ever since this very thing *has* been done, in memory of Him who did it first? The command that fell from lips that even while they uttered it had almost received the consecration of death, that command was not only a command, but a prophecy: and the command has found obedience, and the prophecy fulfilment, at every altar that has since been crowned by the crucified image of Jesus Christ. And where has that been done which Jesus did? Ah, my brethren, heretics, taking the Holy Gospel from the guardian hand of the Church, have striven to do it many a time, but they have done it with wavering faith, and with uncertain voice, incredulous of the love or of the power of Jesus, explaining away, even while they uttered them, the very words they uttered. The thing itself that Jesus did, has been done, and done as He did it, only by the anointed hands of the priests of the Holy Catholic Church. But to you, my brethren, children of the Catholic Church, I wish to dwell upon two things involved in these words, that will illustrate in a signal manner the love of our Blessed Lord in the institution of the Eucharist.

There are two things that no human power can ever overcome, and these two things are time and space. We cannot make the past present, we cannot make the distant near. Memory, strive as it may, gives back but the shadow of the past. Imagination seeks to picture a distant scene; it but succeeds in raising before the mind the phantom of a far-off place. Christ in the flesh, as He was on earth, we cannot see, for between us and that sight lie eighteen hundred years. We shall not see the face of Christ our Lord till the angel of death has touched our eyes, and we see it shining in terror or in love from the throne of judgment. Nay, the places consecrated by His earthly presence, by the memories of His footsteps, and the traditions of His love, even these we cannot see, for many a weary league of land and sea stretches between us and that holy eastern land. Time and space stand between the Gospel and ourselves, and no human hand can move those everlasting barriers. But in the institution of the Eucharist Jesus had levelled them to the dust. And how? That consecration in the supper-room at Jerusalem is separated from us—first, by time: to bring it near it was necessary to make it perpetual. It is separated from us by space, it was necessary to make it so common that it could be witnessed everywhere. These two miracles were effected by these five words, "*Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.*" For, by these words Jesus made the consecration of the Holy Eucharist perpetual, and He made it common. Let us examine this a little.

It is conceivable that our Blessed Lord, having determined to institute the Holy Eucharist, might have consecrated just once at the Last Supper, and left the memory of that sublime action to cheer the future generations of His Church. To those few and faithful who were then present He might have said, "You are my Apostles, chosen from the world, the heralds of my Gospel, the pillars of my Church. A long toil is before you and a weary fight. You will bear my Name before kings, who will persecute you; before peoples, who will clamor for your blood.

To do the work I have given you to do, will strain the energies and tax the resources of your bodies and your souls. The world is hard, and against that hard world you will have to break your hearts before you conquer it. Though yours in the issue shall be the victory, yet shall it cost you tears and blood. Weeping blood and tears shall you sow the seed in the ungrateful furrows of the world, and many a toilsome day shall pass, and many a perilous night, before you garner in my kingdom the sheaves of the harvest." But He might have added, "Fear not; commensurate with the work you have to do, and with the perils you have to encounter, shall be the support I am about to give you. However long the way, you can never falter; however stern the conflict, you can never flinch; for I have reserved for you, and for you only, this Sacrament of the Eucharist."

But has Jesus done this? Ah, my brethren, answer for yourselves the question. You are not Apostles.; you have never borne—shall never have to bear—the burden of the Church. Conquer your own passions, and you will have achieved the greatest conquest that God has called on you to achieve; and yet, even to you has He left the treasures of this Sacrament of Love. Time has rolled away, but Jesus, in the Holy Eucharist, is present with you still. Not for Apostles alone was this Heavenly Bread. Priests have carried it on through all the centuries of Christian time, and it has strengthened martyrs, inspired confessors, sanctified virgins—has been not only the bread of the strong, but of the weak, and has been given even to sinners like ourselves. For Jesus has made this gift perpetual in His Church.

Again, Jesus might have ordained that the Blessed Eucharist should be consecrated, say, once in a century in some grand temple in the favored city by him who holds in the Church the highest place on earth. And had Jesus so ordained, the man would think it the glory of his lifetime who had once been present at a scene so unutterably solemn. Has He done even this? Well, my brethren, I myself have seen the Vicar of Christ, standing beneath the dome of the grandest temple that human hands have ever raised, engaged in the consecration of the Eucharist. Lights blazed, and incense burned, and eye and heart were overwhelmed by the glories of St. Peter's. But I have seen also, and you have seen, the self-same act performed in humble chapels, nay, beneath the lowly roof-tree of an Irish cabin, where Mass is said, and where Jesus comes down as really as He ever came at the grandest Mass in the world's stateliest temple. Yes, Jesus has made His greatest gift common as the very elements that sustain our life. Wherever the Church has come, she has first built an altar and offered the unbloody sacrifice. She was driven into the Catacombs—the altar stood hard by the martyr's tomb; and to this day, wherever the Catholic missioner has set his foot, his first act has been to raise an altar and call down the Lord of Heaven to take possession of a new kingdom.

And why has Jesus thus exhausted the resources of His wisdom and the treasures of His love? Why has He determined to remain with us everywhere and forever in this Sacrament of His Love? Why is Jesus present upon our altars? Is it that the Church may group around His sacramental throne everything of beautiful and grand that human genius can imagine and human hand make manifest to sense? Is it that the lights may blaze and the incense burn, and the loving reverence of the human heart translate itself into music that touches us to tears? Is it that flowers may lend their perfume and their grace to the holiness of our tabernacles, and that long processions of the faithful may wind down, as it were, through all the centuries, singing the "Pange lingua" with unceasing voice, that swells into ever-widening circles as kingdom after kingdom is added to the Church of God? Yes, it is for these purposes; but it is for more than these. It is for these—for all the ritual magnificence of the Church has grown out of and around the Blessed Sacrament, finding there its measure and its end. It is for more than these—for when the flowers bloom their fairest, and when the music is sweetest and most touching, fairer far than any flower that earth can grow, is the love that is throned upon the altar, and a voice sweeter than any earthly music is coming from the tabernacle whence Jesus speaks, with a deeper melody and a fuller meaning than in any other of His marvellous works—speaks and says, "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

Why is Jesus present in the tabernacle? No need to tell you who gather so often around the altar. You know it with a knowledge that is widened by every Communion you receive, by every visit you make to the Blessed Sacrament.

These two things are the sole return He asks for the unimaginable prodigality of love that He has shown in this Holy Sacrament—to visit Him as He waits in the silence of the tabernacle; to receive Him often in the Holy Communion.

My brethren, there is no faithful child of the Catholic Church who does not place it amongst the most cherished hopes and fondest wishes of his heart that, when the parting hour is close at hand, and the frighted soul shrinks back awe-stricken before the close vision of death, he may not die till he has received Jesus in the last Viaticum. Do you wish to secure for yourselves that unspeakable blessing? Well, as a man lives, so shall he die. If during life you have been devoted to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; if you have loved to rest within the shadow of the altar; if you have felt and cherished a sacred hunger for the bread of life; if you have gone to the Holy Communion worthily and often: then be sure that in death He will not desert you. When the grasp of earth is loosening, when the ways of time are done, when the tired heart throbs on to the everlasting silence, then Jesus will be brought to you in the last Viaticum. His gracious presence will cheer the loneliness that the breaking of the bonds of life and earthly love leaves in the troubled heart. His gracious hand will wipe away the tears of your agony, and He will pass from the soul He shall have sanctified to the throne of judgment, whence He shall pronounce upon you the blessed sentence of everlasting life.

GOOD FRIDAY.

"Christus pro nobis mortuus est."—Rom. v. 9.

THERE is a something of fascination even in the ordinary stories of human sorrow. They reach a depth which stories of human triumph cannot reach. They bring with them a deeper pathos, a sublimer meaning; and they win for those who suffer, a sympathy too sacred to be lavished on anything less noble than sorrow. Take the lowliest life man ever lived; surround it, if you will, with every mean commonplace that can strip human life of the innate dignity that is in it; place a man in what servile position you will; yet if, amidst all the degradation of circumstances, you throw around him the mantle of many sorrows, he will make his appeal to the compassion of the human heart; and his claim will be allowed, and men who never looked upon his face will drop a tear over the story of his sorrows.

But why, upon a night like this, do I stay to speak of merely human sorrows? How comes it that, with the figure of the dead Christ looming through the shadows of the Church's mourning, I dare to turn my thoughts and yours to any sorrow less sacred than the sorrow that crowned with a crown of agony, the brow of the expiring Saviour? Ah, to me the reason is obvious. It is because the human heart shrinks back instinctively from such a mystery of sorrow as we contemplate to-day. It is because, recognizing in sorrows which, compared to this, shrink into insignificance, a depth we almost fail to reach, we feel the almost hopelessness of bringing home to ourselves with anything like completeness, the history of our Saviour's Passion. We go up the hill of Calvary, as the three disciples went up Mount Thabor; as they, to see Him glorified, so we, to see Him wrapped around, with all the ignominy that came of His self-sacrifice; and we, though crying aloud like them, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," like them, too, veil our faces before the vision, and fall stricken to the earth by the revelation of that stupendous mystery of sorrow.

And yet, it is not in a spirit that is all sadness we come to celebrate the Passion of our Lord. Though the Church has put aside her crimson and her gold, for the robes of mourning; though she has stripped her altars of everything of beauty that might seem a sign of joy; though she pours forth her pathetic lamentation over the blood-shedding by which she herself was purchased; yet she cannot but look to the tidings of great joy that lie beneath the surface. She cannot, when she bethinks her of the blessings which it brought, help styling this day emphatically "good"; and when in her processions the cross is raised aloft, she lights again the lights upon her altars, and, as she marches on beneath the sacred emblem, she comes to see in it a victorious standard, and her song of sorrow swells into a peal of triumph.

And why should it be otherwise? If Jesus died, did He not die to save a fallen world? If He lay in agony in Gethsemani, did He not bear up the burden of the sins of men? If hands and feet were dug, and side pierced, was it not that salvation might flow out upon the world? And if He hung three hours of mortal agony upon the Cross, did He not hang there an all-atoning sacrifice for the sins of men? Yes, if the mystery of Calvary be a mystery of infinite sorrow, it is a mystery no less of infinite love.

Passing from the supper-room of Jerusalem, Jesus, with His disciples, crossed the brook of Cedron, and passed up the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemani; and there He said to His disciples, "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death," and taking with Him Peter and James and John, He went apart a little and entered into His agony. The night wind faintly rustles through the olives; the white moonlight falls softly on the place; the voices of the day are hushed to silence; night has brought its peace to all the sons of men. To all? Ah, not to all; for there, apart from human consolation, with none to look on Him save God and one favored angel, a Man lies prostrate. His whole frame is convulsed, His body racked with deathly agony, moans of anguish break upon the silence, and as the sweat streams down His face, each drop is a red drop of blood. It is a dreadful thing to see a strong man writhe with anguish—a dreadful thing to see a strong man weep; but oh! what is it when the tears are tears of blood!

And who is the lonely Sufferer? Ah, but a few short days ago His ears were filled with loud "hosannas," the palm branches were strewn beneath His feet, He made His entry into Jerusalem as a king. But a little while ago, and He had passed among the people of the land scattering blessings through their homesteads as He went. There had been healing in His touch, and more than once His voice had broken the spell of death. Who is He? A few years ago earth had not seen Him, yet He, the person who lies prostrate in His agony, was from all eternity the eternal Son of the eternal Father. Oh, what mystery is here! Who has been able to draw down the Son of the living God from the height of glory to the profoundest depths of sorrow? Who has, to all outward seeming, conquered the Eternal Word? Has the old struggle that Michael crushed, revived again, and, after long waiting, have the rebel angels got the victory at last? Not so. Two things have done this to Jesus—love and sin: love, that would not see the world lost because of sin; sin, that would have ruined the world but for love. Sin has done this: as Jesus lies in agony He is crushed to the blood-stained earth, by the weight of all the sins that shall ever blacken the annals which the recording angel writes of the fallen world. The sin of Adam—the fountain of earth's many miseries—the fratricide of Cain, the traitorous kiss of Judas, all the public sins that have branded nations with disgrace and made the homes of peoples desolate, the murders, the robberies, the impurities with which earth shall be defiled unto the end—all press with crushing weight upon the overladen heart of the agonizing Saviour. The sins that dim the glory of youth, and those that make unholy the death-bed of expiring age; the secret sins, committed where no eye but the eye of God might see them, unknown as yet, but which, surely as God liveth, shall be shown in all their black enormity, before the assembled race of Adam, when the angel's trump of doom shall have quickened the dead world. The treachery of false friends, the slanders of lying tongues, the blasphemies of impious lips, the unholy meditations of impure hearts, the wiles of the seducer, the unspeakable malice of the corrupters of youthful innocence—all the sins of men, were pressing at that hour upon the innocent soul of Jesus. He had taken them upon Him as if they were His own; He had clothed Himself with them as with a garment—they clung to Him and mastered Him; and but for a miracle of love, a miracle wrought that He might reserve Himself for further suffering, He would have died alone amid the olives of Gethsemani. No wonder that His soul was sorrowful unto death. No wonder the cry should have gone up from His stricken heart, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." What! does He shrink from the bitter draught? Are the world's hopes about to be destroyed? Are the prophecies of the prophets about to be made vain? Ah, no. Sharp and bitter though His sufferings were, keen though the agony, terrible as was the prospect of the sufferings yet to come, in that sublime moment love conquered with an easy victory, and, without a pause, our Saviour, now indeed our Saviour by solemn acceptance of the sacrifice, cried aloud, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

And now I will ask each of you a very solemn question—What sins of yours weighed heavy on the heart of Jesus; what drops of bitterness have you poured into the chalice of His sorrows? Who dare answer—who dare rise up and tell aloud the crimes of his, that swelled the torrent of the sorrows of Gethsemani? Well, be silent if you will; but enter into the secret chamber of your own souls, that dark spot where sin has buried the past in a grave so unholy, that even memory fears to visit it again, and there, weeping contrite tears, let them fall into the chalice, and sweeten the bitter draught which Jesus emptied to the dregs.

But hark! the silence of the night is broken by the tramp of hurrying feet. Lights strike through the distant shadows; the lonely agony is done; and Jesus, rising from the blood-stained earth, goes forth to meet His enemies. One foe outstrips the rest, and hastens to his prey. Nearer he comes and nearer. A foe, did I say? Ah, surely not a foe! There is a smile upon his lips. Is not this Judas, one of the twelve chosen by Him who read the human heart like an open book—Judas, who, but a few short hours ago, assisted at the first Mass, and partook of the sublimest mystery of love that even the heart of the Man God could devise? Yes, it is even Judas; but, alas for human gratitude and human faith, Judas has sold his Master—has put away the memory of three blessed years of companionship with his God—has trampled on the countless graces of a call to the apostleship. He began the night with the first bad Communion, and now, O God! the traitor's lips are on the lips of Jesus. And He—He whose eye discerns the blackness of the treacherous heart—never thinks of shrinking from the traitor's kiss. The eyes that look down to the very depths of the traitor's heart, are eyes of mercy still. The lips fresh from the defilement of the traitor's kiss, open to call the traitor "friend." What! Judas called a friend by lips that never lie! Ah! a mystery is here of long-suffering love, which narrow hearts like ours can never compass. "Friend, for what hast thou come?" Men would call it irony; but irony, the child of scorn, never found a place on the lips of Jesus. He pauses, as it were, upon the threshold of His public suffering, to give voice to a thought that must have risen in our hearts at the spectacle of His lonely agony—that, black though be the traitorous heart, and though the smile upon the sinner's lip may be a lie before high Heaven, yet there is no hour while the life-blood flows, and while the sinner's heart throbs on, in which Jesus is not ready, nay, yearning, to take him to His heart again.

Jesus is led unresisting before the High-Priest, and stands, with all the sublime patience of a determined purpose, bearing the jeer and the jibe and the buffet—hurried from Caiphas to Pilate, and from Pilate to Herod, through the streets where He had often passed, scattering blessings upon those who mocked Him now in what seemed His fall. But even the malicious ingenuity of those who thirsted for His blood, fails to bring against Him proof of a single crime. Pilate, a stranger to the local prejudices of the Jews, can find no cause in Him, and publicly declares

Him innocent. But they hunger for His life: and voices, that but a day or two before had cried "hosanna," shrieked hoarsely now, "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him." And Pilate, the unjust judge, worked upon by a skilful appeal to his personal interest, yielded to their outcries. Yielded, but not without a struggle, for he who was not noble enough to fight for justice against personal interest, yet felt remorse enough to make him stoop to artifice. He brings before them Jesus and Barabbas. One of them must needs be put to death: which it is to be, let the people judge. Who Jesus was, we know; but who was Barabbas? A notorious malefactor, a robber and a murderer, one who had outraged every law, human and divine, and trampled on every ordinance that keeps society together. His hand had been against every man, and every man's hand against him, till at length, wearied by his crimes, men had risen against him, as against some savage beast: he had been hunted to his lair, and all Jerusalem had rejoiced when he was led fettered to her prisons. And yet, impelled by the demon passion of mad cruelty and furious injustice, they have taken Barabbas, and rejected Jesus, and in words that thrill one in the reading, even after eighteen hundred years, they invoked on themselves the curse that has worked so visibly ever since—"His blood be upon us and upon our children." Surely, it would seem that, even the far-reaching wisdom of God was well-nigh exhausted in devising every circumstance that could invest the passion with unexampled bitterness. But, while we reprobate the conduct of the Jewish rabble, and turn with horror from the story of their injustice, lo, a question that must be answered, starts up from the depths of awakened conscience—Can it be possible that we, even we, have sometimes rejected Jesus, and taken to our hearts the Barabbas of some vile passion?

The sentence has been passed, and Jesus has been handed over to a brutal soldiery. Who can tell the story of that long night of anguish! We may not pause to mark the stages of that agony; a lifetime would not suffice to realize a tithe of the bitterness that was in it. We may not pause to detail how the scourge tore and hissed through His sacred flesh, and left such disfigurement upon Him, that even Mary, save by the unerring instinct of a mother's love, would scarce have known the Son whom she had borne; how the thorny crown pressed heavy on His aching temples, each thorn a very passion in itself; how the soldiers mocked and spat upon Him, and vexed His overborne heart with words of bitterest insult; how His disciples fled from Him in His sorest need; and how one, the one whom He had distinguished above the rest, frighted by the sound of a woman's voice, thrice denied Him with an oath.

Laden, at length, with the heavy cross, Jesus goes on to Calvary. Thrice did He fall upon that last sad journey, and thrice the brutal soldiers dragged Him to His feet again. Never since the world began was seen, and never shall be seen again till the world shall end, a journey such as this. Amid the yells and curses of a furious crowd, uncheered save by the tears of a few women of Jerusalem, He goes onward to the doom which men had pronounced against their God. At length He comes to Calvary. And, oh! surely now there has been suffering enough; surely God will stay the arm of His vengeance against Him who is laden with the self-imposed burden of the sins of men: surely God will be as merciful to His only-begotten Son as He was of old to the son of Abraham, and will provide another victim. But no; there comes no voice from heaven to stay the sacrifice—the Lord of Hosts must die.

Stripped violently of His garments, which cling to His wounded flesh, He is laid upon the cross, and the execution commences. The rough nails tear and crash through bone, and sinew, and muscle; the heart grows sick with agony, the frame convulses, and through the tortured body a wave of anguish surges, as if upon each straining nerve there hung a separate agonizing life. The cross is lifted up, and dropped into its place with a shock that strains each nerve, and opens every wound again. Three hours—oh! what hours of agony unutterable—He hung upon the cross, and then, amid the darkness of an affrighted world, bowing down His weary, wounded head, crying out with a loud voice, "All is consummated," Jesus died. Yes, it was consummated—the mysteries of three-and-thirty years have found an explanation in that death-cry. The chains have fallen from the race of Adam—the world has been redeemed.

And now, standing sadly beneath the cross, looking up through blinding tears on the face of the dead Christ, we ask—Who has done this? is there one who listens whose soul is stained with deadly sin? To him I say, thou art the man. Thou it was, and not another, who pressed the chalice to His lips amid the olives of Gethsemani; thou it was, and not another, who kissed Him with the treacherous kiss of Judas; thy hand hath plied the cruel scourge, hath pressed upon His aching brow the crown of thorns; thou hast preferred to Him the robber, Barabbas, hast made His cross so heavy and so hard to bear. Yes; God though He was, sinless though He was, thy sin hath killed Him.

And is there pardon any more for sin, since sin has done a deed like this? Ah! look up into that dead face, and see, if even death has had the power to banish the lines of deepest tenderness. Who dare stand beneath the cross and say that it is hard for sin to be forgiven? Who, in those hours of agony—hours the most sacred and most solemn that the world can ever witness—who stood by Him in His agony? Mary might well be there, for she was His mother, and she was sinless; John might well be there, for Jesus loved him for his purity; but Magdalen—she, who but a little while ago had lifted an unblushing brow of sin in the streets of Jerusalem—should such a one as she be there? Oh! dear Jesus, Thou wouldst have it so; and what sinner can hesitate to approach Thee, when he knows that the last look of love from an expiring Saviour was shared alike by Mary the sinless and Mary the sinner.

But, one thing is necessary—sincere repentance. With it Judas had been saved, without it Peter would have perished. All-powerful in its efficacy though the blood of Jesus be, there is just one thing it will not do. It will not, may not, cannot save the unrepenting sinner. Let us ask Him by all the memories of which this night is full, to turn on us such a look as that with which He looked at Peter. Let us ask Mary—whom, in His hour of bitterest anguish, He forgot not to leave us as our mother—to turn her eyes of mercy on us. And, oh! when we, too, come to die, when the pale lips tremble in the agony, may those sweet names be last to linger on them. And when our weary hearts throb on to the great silence of death, may every throb go up to God, laden with the two acts we learn from the mystery of the Cross—an act of sorrow and an act of love. Amen.

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

MORE than three thousand years ago, an inspired voice was lifted up to tell the story of man's life; and it was told in a mournful sentence, for the voice said this: "Man born of woman, lives but for a little time, and is filled with many miseries." So it had been from the beginning until then, so is it now, and so shall it be till the angel of the Judgment shall have written the last page of the long, sad history of the human heart. The wisdom and the experience of all ages have been prompt to testify, that man's life is nothing like a holiday—that it is in all cases a very solemn, and, in most cases, a very sorrowful thing, whether to him who lives it, or to him who ponders on it in his heart.

When children grow out of the unconsciousness of early childhood; when they begin to have their minds gradually opened to the life that is theirs, and to the things that are around them; in the gladness of their young hearts, and the enthusiasm of their happy inexperience, they fondly mark and faithfully observe their birthdays as they come. They mark the day on which their life began, as a day of happy omen, and they call upon those around them to sympathize in their happiness. But, the years pass fleetly by, and each, as it passes, brings its measure of experience, and leaves its load of care; and, as men grow up, and advance into manhood, they strive themselves to forget, and to keep out of the memory of others, the coming of their birthdays. They begin to find out what the world is, into which they have entered by their birth. They begin to feel for themselves, the truth—new to them in its bitterness, but older than Job who spoke it long ago—"Man born of woman, lives but for a little time, and is filled with many miseries."

And so it comes, that grown men who have entered upon the battle of life, forget their birthdays, or cease to celebrate them with any special observance.

And even the Church of God, the guardian under Him of spiritual life; even she, when she takes into her hands the record of some noble life, that is worthy to be lifted up and fixed above her everlasting altars; even when she scans with the keenness of her infallible vision the life of a saint—mark you this—she does not fix upon the birthday, but rather on the deathday, as the day of happiest omen. For, though that saint be now in heaven, the fight was not won when he was born; many a perilous day should pass, on any one of which he might have lost the battle, before the hand of death would place the laurel on his brow; and hence, over him, too, as he lay an infant, might have been chanted the mournful words, "Man born of woman, lives but for a little time, and is filled with many miseries." Only of three lives does the Church commemorate the birthdays—of our Blessed Lord, who was holiness itself; of John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother's womb; and of Mary Immaculate, the Queen of Angels, the Comfortress of Men, the Mother of the Lord of Heaven—she whose birth touches this September day, with a beauty deeper than the autumn beauty of ripened cornfields or fading woods.

To-day is the birthday of Mary our Mother; to-day she comes to us an infant, bearing, as it were, on her brow, not alone the glory of the autumn, but the glory of the destiny with which God had crowned her life. To-day, the Church says, "O ye children! toiling in the world's ways, busy are your brains, and hearts, and hands; many a toil is yours and many a sorrow, but to-day let business fall from hand and thought, let toil cease, and work forego its claim for one brief day. In Catholic hearts there is, to-day, no place for sorrow, for to-day is the birthday of Mary our Mother."

The birth of the Blessed Virgin, to what shall I liken it? To this: it was as the dawn breaking upon the world, and proclaiming the near approach of the glory of the sunrise. You have, doubtless, sometimes witnessed the sublime spectacle which God renews every morning, when darkness flees before the dawn, and dawn broadens and brightens into the flush of sunrise. First, there is darkness spread like a pall upon the face of the dead earth; a veil of shadow lies on tree and flower, and there is no light, save, perhaps, the glimmer of a solitary star, set like a jewel on the dusky brow of night. Then, in the very darkest hour, there comes, shivering through the darkness, the faintest tinge of light, playing through the gloom like a feeble pulse. Gradually the hills begin to form themselves upon the vision, just as if they were being once again created out of nothing. Soon, there is a belt of light across the east; and the dawn seems to gather up its scattered glories, and bind them like a crown upon the topmost ridges of the eastern hills; and men begin to say, "Now it is day," and look to see the sun mount his vacant throne in heaven. So it was with the birth of the Mother of God.

Darkness, a darkness as of doom, had fallen upon the human heart and upon the homes of men, when sin first found its way into the Paradise that God had made so beautiful, and had meant to be so happy;

and in that, the world's darkest hour, when the brows of God seemed black with anger, and when the gloom was lighted only by the baleful flashes of the angel's fiery sword that guarded the lost Paradise—in that hour of darkness and desolation, uprose, starlike, above the gloom, the name and the promise of Mary—"She shall crush thy head," said God to Satan, "and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."

And that sweet name and the great promise annexed to it, was handed on through all the generations. Patriarch, upon his death-bed, left it as an heirloom to patriarch; kings bound it like a glory around their dying brows, and whispered it before they died to the kings who were to be. Prophets, standing on the mountain-tops of vision, saw from afar the brightness of her coming, and shouted down the tidings to the desolate world. And the name and the promise kept ever broadening and brightening, and, at length, the last of the prophets saw the time so near, that he laid down the harp of prophecy, because the time was close at hand. It was then the full broad dawn; and when Mary was born, men well might say, that God's day had broken, and, that the work of the world's redemption had begun.

Over every other child that had been born, the inspired words had been uttered—"Man born of woman, lives but for a little time, and is filled with many miseries." "Born of woman," and, consequently, born in the state of original sin, finding himself, at his very first step upon the threshold of existence, met by a barrier, which, if it was not removed, would hinder him from attaining the end for which he was created, and which yet he would be bound to attain, under penalty of everlasting misery. "Living but a little time," for, time is not to be measured so much by mere years as by the work accomplished in the years that have been given. And, how little are men able to accomplish! They put their hands to many things, but grasp in the end but poor results. Take man's longest life; and, if you estimate it by the things it has accomplished, will you not be forced to say—"The time in which he lived was short after all," and "filled with many miseries"? Ah! and, above all, filled with the one great, the only misery—the misery of sin.

Now, my brethren, the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary was exactly the opposite to all this; and it is because it was so, that the Church directs us to commemorate her birthday. She, too, was born of woman; she was, even as we are, a child of Adam; but when all sinned in Adam, she—his remote and greatest descendant—was specially exempted from the doom; and, because she was destined to hold toward the Lord of Purity the place of mother, and, because it could not be that His mother should ever be pointed out as having lain, even for an instant, under the doom of any sin; for these reasons Mary was conceived immaculate—without the stain of original sin.

Again—whatever be the number of Mary's years, could any one ever say of her that she lived only a little time? She lived long enough to accomplish every design, great and numerous though they were, that God had formed in her regard. She lived long enough to carry out to the ripeness of its final perfection, the destiny with which God had crowned her—the highest, the holiest, the sublimest destiny that God could possibly bestow upon any creature of His hand.

Lastly—Mary had many a thing to suffer, but of the real misery with which men are filled, she never knew the bitterness. When God made her, He gave her a martyr's heart—a heart capable of sorrow, to an almost infinite degree—and its capabilities, great as they were, were tested to the full; yet, there was one thing that makes man's misery, but which that heart never knew; it never knew the slightest stain of any actual sin.

As she came forth from nothing the daughter of God, with the jewel of original innocence shining on her infant brow, so she lived her life; took her God and her Son to her bosom; lived with Him in that closest of all human relations—the relation of a mother to her Son; saw Him die; and, when the time was come, closed her eyes upon the world, of whose history she was herself so large a part, and opened them forever to the brightness of the Godhead of her Son; and all this, without having ever, in her long life, incurred the faintest stain of even the slightest conceivable actual sin.

Such, my brethren, was the mother whose birthday we are celebrating. Is it any wonder that of such a mother, the birthday can never be forgotten?

And, how are we to celebrate it? First, surely, with the deepest devotion of childlike hearts. It is not necessary for me to remind you how large a part of the religion you profess, is made up of devotion to Mary. No need to remind you, that her honor is intimately bound up with the honor of her Divine Son; no need to tell you, that the Catholic, who has ceased to be devout to Mary, has long since ceased to be a good Catholic, and is far advanced to the miserable position of being that blot upon Christianity—that plague of the Church of God—a bad Catholic. No; you know these things well; and, in the outward profession of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, there is little danger that any congregation of Irish Catholics will ever be found wanting. But, something more is required than mere outward profession. The devotion, that will be acceptable to Mary and profitable to yourselves, is, and must be, devotion of the heart. Nowhere, in times past, has the name of Mary found a more cherished home; nowhere a warmer welcome, than in the hearts of

Irish Catholics. It has been the special honor of our land, an honor that glittered on her forehead when it was bleeding with a crown of many thorns, that she clung with a tenacity that no persecution could conquer, to the name of Mary, to devotion to the Mother of God. And, when the lights were quenched upon her altars, and quenched in the heart's blood of her people; when the altars themselves were overturned; when her priests were hunted fugitives with a price upon their heads, the people carried in hearts, which no sword could ever reach, the name of Mary, and her honor, and her love. And, hence it was that, when the night of persecution passed; when the cloud was lifted off the land; when they built again the overturned altar, and restored the ruined church, it was found that, owing, under God, to their firm grasp and faithful hold of devotion to His blessed Mother, the Irish people had lost not one jot or tittle of the Holy Catholic faith for which their fathers died. And they have left to us the legacy of that devotion. Oh! my brethren, cherish it as you cherish the apple of your eye. Lift up your hearts to-day to Mary, as she looks down from her throne in heaven, upon this faithful land that always loved her, and that loves her now, and strive to keep her birthday as becomes so great a festival. And as children of a happy household, when the birthday of a dear mother comes, strive to present to her some offering, which, however little in itself, yet serves well to express the affection that prompted the giving; so do you, every one of you, young and old, rich and poor, celebrate this birthday of Mary your mother, by making to her an offering which she will deem worthy of her acceptance. You will ask me, what shall you offer? Well, there is an offering which every one can make to Mary, and it is the greatest gift that one human heart can offer to another—nay, the greatest that man can offer to his God—it is the gift of your love. Ah! my brethren, do not undervalue the priceless gift of human affection, which it is yours to give or to withhold. For, I say, when the poorest man that ever lived has given, whether to man or to God, the gift of his affection, he has given a gift greater than which no king can ever give. This is the gift that Mary wants. She, the mother, is singularly like her divine Son; and He said, long ago, to each of us, "Son, give me thy heart." So says Mary —Give me thy heart: give it to me, that, purified by the touch of my immaculate hands—raised above all earthly affections, by the graces with which my intercession will enrich it—it may be an offering worthy of an eternal place amongst the treasures of my Son. Jesus asks us for our hearts: let us give them through the hands of her, from whom, having been pleased to accept His sacred humanity, every gift comes with a richer consecration, and a value heightened a thousandfold—give them through the hands of Mary your mother.

ALL SOULS.

"Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least, you, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

THERE is just one thing on earth that is absolutely universal, and that one thing is death. There is one sorrow that finds a home, at some time or other, in every human bosom, and that one sorrow is, sorrow for the dead. Yes, "it has been appointed unto all men once to die," and, neither human prudence nor human power can stay the execution of that dread decree. Our path through life may be a pleasant one; it may be strewn with every flower which a fallen world has ever yet preserved, but, at some place upon that road, a grave is dug by the decree of God, and that grave shall one day claim us. Who of us, looking round, can fail to perceive the awful universality of death? The throne is not hedged round so securely, but that death at the appointed time breaks through and leaves it vacant. Riches cannot bribe it, poverty is not too lowly to claim its notice, and so it comes that all men die. But by some strange perversity, the very commonness of death makes its awful significance less heeded. It is only when it touches us closely; it is only when it lays its hand on lives that had been closely bound up with our own; it is only when the near and dear have been its victims; it is only then, we feel the awful reality of death, and then the common sorrow comes to us and makes our houses desolate.

But when those we loved have come to die; when the parting has taken place that gives to death a bitterness which else it would not have; when we long in vain for the well-remembered greeting of the now cold hand, and the music of a voice that has gone silent, can we bring ourselves to believe that all is over between our dead and us. Can we bury our dead out of our sight; stand sorrow-stricken beside the lifeless form: wait until the last sod has been heaped upon the grave; shed one, the saddest tear of final parting; and then, go back to mix again with the busy world, and believe that we have no more to do with the departed?

Oh! surely not. There is something in our hearts that protests against such a conclusion. It would be doing violence to the very nature that God has given us, to believe that human friendship and human love reach only to the grave, and cannot pass beyond its shadow; that they are flowers so frail that death's cold touch can wither them forever; to believe that even the mysterious power of death can break the mystic bond that, in the first and greatest of the commandments, binds the love of our fellow-creatures with the love of God Himself. Our very instincts —and after all these are but dim foreshadowings of mighty truths—our very instincts compel us to look beyond the grave, to see through all its shadows the traces of another world, and to brighten, by the hope of a future meeting, the gloom which the death of those we loved had flung upon our hearts. Nor could we feel even this to be enough. It would be but poor consolation, after all, to live through the weary years upon a hope, and to feel that all the while, until the future actually came, our connection with our departed brethren had absolutely ceased; to feel that, though love and friendship might bloom again in a brighter land, yet, that for the present they were dead, and could make no sign.

The heart would look for more than this. Its very affection would prompt it to seek a means to bind together the world in which it still remains, and that mysterious world beyond the grave, whither the dead have gone, and to which the living are hourly speeding.

It seeks to be assured that love and friendship can reach beyond the grave, and do good service; that kindly offices of charity need not cease because one soul still remains in the flesh, and the other has departed to the unseen land. And lo! faith has made these wishes and these hopes a living reality. The loftiest intellect could only conjecture, the fondest heart could only wish, that these things were so, but the Church of God, drawing forth from the treasury of faith the sublime dogma of the Communion of Saints, has revealed these wonders to the simplest intellects.

She tells us that there are two worlds—the world of matter and of sense—and the world of spirits. The world around us which we see, and feel, and hear; and the world to come, which can be reached only by the gate of death. She tells us, too, that as in this our world there are different states, so there are different states in that other world as well. She tells us that the state of any individual in the world to come, depends precisely on the condition of his soul when death has summoned him before the judgment-seat of God. If the soul, at death, be in the state of mortal sin, it is lost forever. Of such as these we need not speak. They have fought and lost, and their loss is irreparable and eternal. They have passed forever from the Communion of Saints. For them, forevermore, no hope may spring in any heart; for them, forevermore, no prayer may go before the throne of God.

But to those who die in the state of grace salvation is secure. Their fight has ended in victory, and for them is an immortal crown. But knowing, as we know, that into the unveiled presence of God nothing that is defiled can enter, knowing that such is the Infinite Holiness of God, that the slightest stain excludes us from the enjoyment of the beatific vision, and knowing moreover that few can hope to pass without defilement from a world where the Holy Ghost has declared that even the "just man falls seven times," we are naturally led to ask what is the lot of such as these in the world of spirits. Again, we know that though mortal sin may be remitted, as to its guilt and as to the eternal punishment it deserved, yet there remains a temporal penalty, and we can easily conceive a man passing from this life before complete penance has blotted out the debt. Here, then, are two classes: what shall be the lot of those when death has claimed them; shall they go into the glorious presence of their God? Surely not; they are not yet purified. Shall they, then, go into everlasting fire? No; God is faithful to His word, and only to deadly sin has He attached the awful punishment of hell. Where, then, shall their lot be cast? The Church, borne out by reason as well as by revelation, the Church answers at once, they shall go into a place of temporary punishment, where they may have their venial sins wiped out, and may pay the debt which they owe to the Infinite Justice of God.

Such, briefly, is the doctrine of purgatory; a doctrine full of teaching upon God's justice and God's mercy; a doctrine so consoling in itself, and so much in accordance with what the nature of the case might have been expected to demand, that when those who deny it, refuse to acknowledge the authority of the inspired word that declares that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins," I can only wonder at their blindness—not judging individuals amongst them—but leaving them to their conscience and their God.

There, in that dark prison, lie the Holy Souls, looking with patient eyes to heaven, awaiting the hour of their release, enduring a punishment so keen that some saints have not hesitated to assert that the pains of Purgatory differ from the pains of hell only in this—that they are not eternal. But yet they have not ceased to be a part of the Church. They have passed from the Church Militant upon earth—one day they shall pass to the Church Triumphant in the glory of heaven. For the present they are members of the Church Suffering in Purgatory. And precisely because they are still members of the Church, we—bound to them by the mystic bond of the Communion of Saints—can assist them by our prayers, no less than we can assist each other; nay, even more, because the efficacy of prayer for one who is still upon earth may be hindered of its effect by the perversity of that will of his which God has left free for good or evil; but in Purgatory, that land of calm and patient suffering, the Holy Souls, confirmed in the possession of sanctifying grace, offer absolutely no obstacle to the efficacy of any intercession that is made in their behalf.

On their bed of fire they can do no more than suffer. They are powerless for themselves. The suffering they endure is quite beyond any conception we can have of suffering. We strive, and strive in vain, to make unto ourselves the faintest image of their torment. Go down to the profoundest depth of any suffering you have ever felt; the suffering of the Holy Souls is deeper still. Sense and intellect are alike tormented. The fire is around them and about them: it pierces through the quivering soul till life itself is agony. Their intense longing for the sight of God brings with it an anguish so keen of hope deferred, that every moment seems one long age of agony till the blessed time be come. They suffer, and they make no sign. Cries were useless there; no tears can quench the fire that torments them; no cry could pierce the barrier that sunders the living from the dead, nor strike upon the heedless ears of men. Their friends on earth could help them if they only would, but their friends on earth are busy with many things. Ah! those on earth who loved them, and whom they loved, have ceased to think of them—they have no device to stir their memory. The sympathy that was once so strong between the two has failed, and faded, and died out, and the suffering souls can make no personal appeal that might awaken it again. They plead by suffering, but too often is their pleading vain, because their suffering is forgotten; and the friends on earth form many a scheme of business and pleasure, nor heed the moan of anguish that, through weary day and lonely night, goes up from the prison of Purgatory. "Have pity on us," etc.

How have we responded to their cry for help? Our sorrow for the dead is keen, but, oh! it is not lasting. Memory's magic pictures grow fainter every day. There may have been a time when we knelt distracted by the death-bed, and deemed that because of the bereavement we were about to suffer earth could never be bright for us again. And then, in the first burst of sorrow, memory was so keen that its keenness was a pain. We seemed for some time to see the face of the dead, and to hear the voice that was gone silent. But it does not last. We go out into the world, and the world supplies us with new thoughts, and the dead friend is remembered but faintly—soon entirely forgotten.

Soon the very name of the dead is not mentioned, save at some very rare interval, and then is mentioned with but a scanty prayer not much deeper than the careless lips. Oh, shame! that it should be so. Is this our boasted friendship; is this our boasted love; is this the affection that was to survive the grave; is this the memory that was to be eternal? Our friend lies prostrate in the intensest agony: the means of help are at our hands, and yet we are too cold, too careless, too forgetful to apply them.

God has left them utterly to themselves; He has, as it were, put it out of His own power to assist them personally. He seems to stand aloof, looking silently down upon their keen but uncomplaining agony. He has, to be sure, with that mercy that knows no limit—He has, even while seeming to exact the uttermost farthing—He has provided abundant, nay, superabundant means for their relief. But He Himself will not apply them. He has left that to us—to us who were their friends and fellows; who loved them, and whom they loved, who stood by tearful and saw them die, who knelt above their fresh graves, and almost swore by the bitterness of our sorrow that we never would forget them—to us it is that God has left the application of the infallible means which He has provided for their relief. And, surely, one would have thought that the agony would be short which kind hearts had power to shorten, and the suffering light when kind hands held the remedy. But, oh! we forget our dead. Engrossed by our own pursuits, we are unmindful of the suffering that is unseen. The world's voices are in our ears, the world's distractions in our hearts, and we take no notice of the ceaseless cry of anguish that comes upward from the bed of fire. "Have pity on us," etc.

At the time when our Blessed Lord walked upon the earth, there was in Jerusalem a certain pool where the sick and those afflicted with bodily diseases were wont to congregate. At certain times an angel of the Lord came down and stirred the waters, and the sick man who went first into the pool after the visit of the angel, was healed of his infirmity. When Jesus came there He found a man so infirm that he could not, in the least degree, assist himself, and he had been waiting day after day, for eight-and-thirty years, while others who were stronger than he, or who had friends to help them, went down before him and were healed. Our Lord asked him why he had not availed himself of the blessing which God at times had given to the waters, and he answered in words that are full of deepest and most mournful pathos: "Lord, I have no man, who, when the water has been stirred, will cast me into the pool." Oh! my brethren, in those few words what a story is compressed of the tedious passing of weary years. He had come there a youth, with hope in his heart that he would soon be cured of his infirmity; and many a long year seemed to spread before him, in which he might enjoy his recovered health. But the years passed by, and those who were boys along with him grew to be men, and many a change had passed upon the faces that he knew; many a sunrise did he see in hope, and many an evening closed in the disappointment of the hope deferred that maketh sick the heart: and his hopes were dying out, and his hair was growing gray, when, afte nearly forty years, Jesus came and cured him. Oh! my brethren, what a sorrowful story! Eight-and-thirty years of waiting, the certain remedy before his eyes, and *none* to help him to avail himself of its efficacy. Friends he may have had—one friend he surely had, when his mother held him in her arms—but his mother was dead, and time and the chance and change of life had dispersed his early friends, or, after the manner of the world, in the day of his distress they had forsaken him. In that weary march of lonely years, what want of human feeling that man had witnessed! what cool contempt, what silent carelessness! and we are tempted to exclaim against a city whose annals are disgraced by a story such as this. But pause, before one bitter thought forms itself in your minds, before one word of condemnation rushes to your indignant lips. Stay a little.

There is a certain place in the Church of God, a place which you have not seen with the eye of flesh, but which faith teaches you that it exists as really as the places you have walked in, and that you know with the familiar knowledge of every-day experience. It is a land over which hangs a cloud of silent sorrow, of uncomplaining agony, that is voiceless in the intensity of its resignation. And in that silent land of pain lies many a friend of yours whom your heart cannot forget—friends whom you knew once—whose faces, whose smiles, whose voices, were familiar to you in days gone by, who were members, it may be, of the same household, who knelt with you at the same altar—who worked, and prayed, and smiled, and were bound to you by every tie which the kindly charities of nature and of grace can forge. They died; and they are in Purgatory. Stricken are they by no mere earthly malady, but by an agony for which earth has no image nor any name. Consumed are they by no mere earthly fever, but by the fever of a fire that searches their very soul. And you pass by—you, their friends—and you have at your disposal the healing flood of the precious blood of Jesus. You pass by—heedless, or forgetful, or indifferent, it matters little which—you pass by and give no help. You leave the sufferers there, looking up with pain-stricken, wistful eyes to the heaven above, and saying: "O God, we have no friend who, when the healing blood of Thy Divine Son is ready in the Holy Mass to extinguish the flames of our torment, will use it for our relief." My brethren, condemn if you will, in what sharp terms indignation may suggest, the heartlessness of the citizens of Jerusalem, but do not omit to compare it with your own, when, either through carelessness or forgetfulness, you neglect to do your part, the part of friendship, the part of charity, to assist the suffering souls in Purgatory.

There is no devotion more acceptable to God, or more conducive to His glory, than the devotion to the Holy Souls. It rests on faith, it works through hope—it is the fragrant flower, the perfect fruit of charity. There is no other devotion better adapted to secure your own salvation. Release one soul from Purgatory, and what do you do? You place in the living Presence of God in heaven a saint, whose gratitude shall never weary, to supplicate in your behalf, till you yourself sit by him at the feet of God. But that is not all. The very means you must adopt to help the souls in Purgatory tend, of their own nature, directly to your own salvation. You pray for them—you, too, gain merit from your prayer; you gain an indulgence for them—to do so you must be in the state of grace yourself, that is, in the way of salvation, your foot upon the very threshold of heaven; you procure a Mass to be said for them—you have, yourself, a share in the superabundant fruit of the Holy Sacrifice. Our dear mother, Mary, is, in a special manner, Queen of this realm of suffering. Do you not think she will help those most, and love them most dearly, who aid her suffering clients? So it is; in the loving economy of God's Providence, every step we take to assist the Holy Souls is a step further on our own way to heaven.

And oh! my brethren, on a night like this—on the eve of the great festival which the Church has instituted for their relief—it needs no words of mine, nor any words to plead the cause of the suffering souls. To-night they plead themselves.

There is not one amongst you whose home death has not sometime visited. Touched into reflection by an anniversary like this, you will look around and see, it may be, a vacant chair that was not vacant once. You miss an old familiar face, and have memories of a voice that mingles no more with the other voices of your home.

Can we not picture the departed, looking up to-night from their bed of anguish, with a gleam of hope in their wistful, sorrow-clouded eyes? Well may they have hope; for, surely there is no one here so heartless as to forget them. The memory of them will come back upon their friends to-night, and the echo of their half-forgotten voices will wake the hearts that loved them to sympathy for their suffering, and to an effort for their release. And surely—an earnest prayer, an indulgence, an application of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in their behalf, will prove that they have not been forgotten, and that friendship, blessed by faith, and made strong by charity, can reach beyond the grave. And while your souls are filled with reflections such as these, I give place to them; and in the silence of your hearts it is no longer I, but they themselves that shall cry out, and shall not cry in vain: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, you, at least, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

LESSONS OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

(FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.)

THERE come to all of us, from time to time, special seasons for reflection. There are certain breathing spaces in the race, the end of which will bring the rest of death. There are times when we pause, as it were, upon the road of life, and look back, half in sorrow and half, perhaps, in thankfulness, on the way we have been travelling—thinking, sadly enough, of baffled aims and blighted hopes; of the good we might have done, but did not; of the evil we need not have done, but which we did—looking back on the failures, and the falls, and the disappointments, that make the landmarks of most retrospects of life; and looking back, too, on the spots which God's grace and our co-operation have made the green spots and pleasant places of our memory; and doing all this to the end that, to use the language of Scripture, we may rise like giants to pursue our way along the path that loses itself, as we look, in the clouds that hang about our future—that path of which we know little more than this, that at some hidden point upon it lies an open grave, where we and our hopes and dreams, our hands that toiled, our brains that planned, our hearts that throbbed such various music, shall be hidden away forever.

Such times are good, and such a time has come to us to-day; for to-day the Church begins another of her years. The First Sunday of Advent is the first day of the new ecclesiastical year, and is, consequently, a day to look back on the years that lie behind us, and forward to the years that may be given to us yet. A time to ascertain our position in God's world, to realize the end which Infinite Wisdom has given us to attain, and the means which Infinite Goodness has placed at our disposal for its attainment; a time to remedy the failures of the past, to set ourselves right in the present, and so prepare to meet, not alone that future over which death stands watchman, and whose ending is the grave, but also that greater, wider, and more awful future, the end of which shall never be.

And how are we to do all this? From what point shall we start, from what principle begin to form a complete system of the philosophy of Christian life? To assign such a starting-point, to determine such a principle, is a task from which the boldest well might shrink. The highest intellect might stand before the problem abashed even as the lowest. Human learning, and human genius, and human taste, the wealth of human intellect and the poetry of human feeling, each—nay, all united—might fail to strike the keynote from which would spring the wondrous harmony of Christian life—might fail to set before us one simple subject which would comprise all necessary teaching in its single self; a subject which would be, at once, the beginning, and the middle, and the end, of that one great wisdom which every one, at the peril of his soul, is bound to master. But what all human resources might fail to do, and might acknowledge without shame its failure, the Church has done with unerring accuracy, by placing before us to-day the picture of the Last Judgment. Let us consider it a little.

The time will come when the world shall have fallen on its last days, and when the shadow of approaching doom shall fall deep and dark upon nature and on the human heart. A time will come when the system of the thousand worlds which wheeled through space at the first bidding of the Almighty, shall begin to give token that their purpose is nearing its completion. There shall be signs in the stars, and the very light of heaven shall grow dim. Rumor shall follow rumor, as shadow follows shadow, when clouds are blown across the troubled sky, raising vague forms of some infinite terror in the hearts of the world's latest generation. The things that have been used by God as extraordinary chastisements of His people shall become so rife as to lose their strangeness, though they shall not lose their sting, and the very voices of the wind, and the stormy music of the sea, shall begin to speak of some awful doom that is at hand. We cannot picture adequately the awfulness of that Last Advent that men shall keep, when they shall await the coming of Him who came once with tenderest mercy, but whose second coming shall be one of sternest justice. The nearest approach to the sublimity of the subject seems to me to be found in the words of the Evangelist, who, after enumerating some of the signs that shall precede the Judgment, sums up the effect of them in the startling words: "Men shall wither away with fear."

And then shall come the end. The time will come when the last man shall die, and his body lie unburied on the earth which shall afford a grave no more. A silence deep, but far more awful, than that which preceded the creation, shall fall on the dead world. And that silence how shall it be broken? The angel's trump of doom shall send its wailing note through all the silent spaces of the world. The graves shall yawn wide open, the sea give up its dead, and the countless hosts that have peopled all the centuries shall be marshalled together in the valley of judgment.

And we shall be there too. As surely as we stand to-day before the hidden presence of Jesus in the tabernacle, as surely as the heavens bend above us, and the earth sustains our feet, as surely as God liveth, and hath said it, so surely shall we, one day, fall into our place at the bidding of the angel's trumpet. And what shall be our thoughts in that awful hour?

The bitterest hours that most men know on earth are those hours when their sin has found them out, and when the passions they have indulged turn to a nest of scorpions in their bosoms. When the still small voice of conscience pronounces its unchangeable sentence, when the mists that passion threw around crime are rent asunder and the sinner, in his remorse, becomes loathsome even to himself. But what is even this to the bitterness of the awakening conscience that shall take place before the judgment-seat of Christ? The light of God Himself shall pierce the inmost recesses of the sinner's heart. "He shall search Jerusalem with lamps." Concealment shall be possible no more. The smile upon the lip shall no longer hide the treachery of the heart, and the holiness of exterior that came not from virtue, but from hypocrisy, shall be a garment no longer of honor, but of ignominy and shame.

Then shall the judgments of the world be signally reversed. Then shall be discovered how delusive were the standards by which it measured men and things. Then the worldly prudence whose basis was selfishness, and whose highest ideal was self-interest, shall appear paltry beside that sublime wisdom, which was so far above mere worldly natures that worldly nature sneered at it and called it folly. "We fools esteemed their lives folly." Then shall men and deeds that make a stir in history be found both in true sublimity and true poetry infinitely inferior to the record of some life whose only earthly record was the *hic jacet* of the churchyard. Then shall be found that things which men had long agreed to call successes, had been signal failures, and that poor souls who were thought to have failed, have succeeded to an extent which it hath never entered the heart of man to conceive. For, in truth, success is a different thing when it is estimated by man, and when it is estimated by God.

And what shall be the subject of the judgment? All the thoughts that men have thought from the first feeling of rapture that rose in the heart of the world's first father when he looked forth on the fresh beauty of the newly-made world, down to the latest thought of him who shall be last to die; all the words that shall have ever fallen from human lips, in blessing or in cursing, in tenderness or in anger, in seriousness or in sport; all the actions that find a place in the written or unwritten annals of the world that shall be no more;—all shall be made manifest before the countless brotherhood of the human race.

The sinner, in this life, may do his sin in secret. He may seek the lonely places of the world, and may wrap himself around with the darkness of the night. He worships his passion in no open temple with lights and incense. Poor fool, he deems himself too wise for that. He worships his sin in the depths of his own heart which no human eye can penetrate, and he, whose every additional breath of life is a proof, did men but know, of the infinite forbearance of the outraged majesty of heaven, may live his life, and sink into his grave without any one ever knowing what a hypocrite he was. Poor fool, he never cast a thought upon the inevitable hour, in which his sins must be made manifest to the assembled universe.

The sentence shall be uttered, and the elect and the reprobate shall go their different ways to meet no more, while heaven delights, while hell torments, while God Himself reigns on. What a parting shall be there! There are partings even on this side of the grave that are hard to bear. Bitter is the hour when lifelong friends must part to see each other no more save in dreams that memory can make from the dead past. Bitter is the hour when time and circumstances, and what men call fate, send forth on widely diverging paths those who loved each other so well that, each losing each seems to lose some dearer portion of his very self. But what are even partings such as these, to the partings that shall take place when the sentence of the judgment shall have been pronounced? The wicked shall go into their place of torment, never more to see the faces that they loved—never more to hear the voices that made music on their ears, never more to smile beneath the smiles that were the sunshine of their lives—never more to feel the kindly charities of friendship or of love. They shall have lost all that is good, and shall be in everlasting possession of all that is evil; and they shall know that never, as long as God shall be God, shall their torments end.

They shall begin their everlasting punishment with the awful picture of the last judgment graven upon their souls. We, with the picture of the same judgment, commence our new ecclesiastical year. But how wide is the difference? For them the judgment shall be past and shall be irrevocable; for us, it has yet to be. The bitter thoughts it shall have caused in them shall know no ending to their bitterness; but to us the picture can afford a lesson which, if we profit by it, can materially affect our personal share in the world's final judgment.

What, then, are the lessons which we should draw from the subject which the Church sets before us to-day? First—we should carry out our manifest intention of making the judgment to come the standard of our lives. We should try to look at things around us in the light of that solemn truth, form our views according to its teaching, and arrange our lives by the lessons it affords. If we resolve to do so, we will find in the last judgment a twofold lesson which will embrace all the necessities of our lives—a lesson on our conduct, as it regards ourselves, and secondly as it regards our neighbor.

First, then, as regards ourselves. The first thing that must strike us, if we look at the world around us by the light of the last judgment, is this, that as we are to be judged not by our high or low position in life, but simply by the work we shall have done, it makes very little matter to us what position in life we hold, provided we do the duties of it well. The world makes vast differences, where none exist, or where, if they exist at all, they are far other than the world supposes. According as thou didst thy work, so, not otherwise, shalt thou be judged. Life is a preparation for the judgment to come; if, then, I would prepare for that judgment, I must attend just to one thing, the manner in which I perform my daily duties.

What a simple rule this is—and, like most simple things, how effective it is against all specious delusions. There are, in the world of Christians, and I speak now of those who think seriously about the business of salvation, two classes who are fixed at the opposite poles of a great delusion. One class I shall call the slaves of the past: the other consists of the dreamers about the future. The former seat themselves, as it were, with folded hands, amid the ruins of their past lives, and think that because their own sins or the sins of others have made their past what they call a failure, therefore they have no more present work in the world. They have a lurking idea, which they dare not express, because its expression would be blasphemy, that God Almighty has made a mistake in allowing them to continue living on, when they see perfectly well that the world has no more work suited to them. The latter class—the dreamers about the future—believe that *their* work, the only work that it is worth their while to do, lies in some distant future, which, by some strange mistake, has not come yet, and which, in the case of such people, seldom comes at all. These people, with uplifted hands and eyes strained upon some future more or less distant, are so absorbed in the vision of something that can only be done hereafter, that they quite overlook the things that ought to be done now. The result in both cases is the same. The present is neglected under one pretence or the other—the pretence of overwhelming sorrow for the past, or the pretence of great schemes for the future. Both are delusions alike, and for both the remedy is the same. Find it in the truth, that, not according to thy vain regrets, nor according to thy dreamy visions, but according to thy works, those works you are doing at this present moment, shall your judgment be.

Let me not be misunderstood. It is not my purpose to advise you to regard neither your past nor your future. There are few persons, indeed, who will not find in their past something which it is highly desirable to remember and to regret. There are fewer still who might not, without incurring the charge of undue ambition, aspire to wider usefulness in the future. God forbid that I should say a word against either; but God equally forbid that I should not give my testimony against any contemplation either of the past or of the future, the effect of which would be to draw away that attention from the present which is absolutely necessary. By all means repent of the past, by all means aspire to higher things in the future, but do so profitably, not foolishly, and let your test be this: if your thoughts about the past, or your dreams about the future, have the effect of making you more careful, more punctual, more perfect in the performance of your present daily duties, then by all means think those thoughts, and dream those dreams; but if, on the contrary, they have the effect of making you think that your present duties are not worth the doing, or not worth the doing well, then let no sentimentality that is apt to connect itself with thoughts about our spiritual past, or dreams about our spiritual future, induce you to believe that they are anything better than a delusion and a snare.

Sanctity consists in the right performance of every-day duties. We are apt to draw a wide distinction between the lives of those whom we call "the saints," and the lives of ordinary Christians like ourselves; and a wide distinction there undoubtedly is. But let not the distinction blind us to the common likeness that must exist between the greatest of God's saints and our poor weak selves, if we are to hope for heaven. If we ever come to be saved it will only be because we, too, shall be saints. If you ask me how this is to be, I do not tell you to go fall into ecstasies, to see visions, to work miracles. No; these things are found in the lives of saints, but these things do not make their sanctity. I tell you to aim at that which all who are saints have had in common with each other, and which we, if we hope to be saved, must have in common with them—faithful performance of the commonplace duties of daily life. Such is the first lesson we should draw from the contemplation of that Judgment in which every man shall be judged according to his works.

The second lesson regards our conduct to our neighbor, and is no less useful and no less necessary.

The Judge, at the last Judgment, shall be our Blessed Lord. And why? Because to Him, and to Him alone, has it been given to judge the living and the dead. And when we consider what will be the subject-matter of that judgment, that it will comprise not alone the words and actions of men, but also the hidden secrets of their thoughts, the motives which prompted them, the circumstances which colored them, the end for which they were done, we see, at once, that to no wisdom less than Infinite could such an office be justly committed. And all of us with one voice confess that Christ, and Christ alone, is the Judge of the living and the dead. Yes; we say it in words, but do we acknowledge it in our conduct?

There is no more difficult task on earth than to judge rightly of a single action of another. For, to judge rightly we should know not merely the outward shell of the act, so to speak, but the inner kernel—the motive, the end, the hidden circumstances—all which must of necessity enter into the formation of a just judgment. Now these things in their completeness we have absolutely no means of knowing. How, then, can we judge? Yet, though no office is so difficult, none so far beyond the range of human powers, there is no office into which we thrust ourselves so often, and with so little regard to prudence or decency. There are many things which men will readily acknowledge they cannot do, but few, indeed, act as if they doubted their perfect competency to be their neighbor's judge. They are always ready to intrude themselves into an office that was never meant for them, and, by judging their neighbor, say to our Blessed Lord, by their acts, what they dare not say in words: "Yes, Lord, Thou art appointed Judge of men, but in this particular case you must abdicate your functions, stand aside and let me pronounce the judgment."

This is precisely what one does when he pronounces one of those flippant judgments that are so common in the world. Remember that Christ is the Judge, not we; and that to His infinite mercy and infinite justice we may safely leave our neighbor's conduct and our own.

These, then, are the two rules of life to begin our ecclesiastical year. Be solicitous about your own daily duties—be not solicitous about the judgment that awaits the actions of your neighbor. Perform well the actions of your daily lives; do them for God, and the doing of them will make you saints. To your neighbor be a neighbor, in the widest sense of Christian charity, but never seek to be his judge. These two principles give you a summary of the duties of the Christian life. You can make of them two wings that will carry you to heaven. And if these shall have been the rule of your lives, the trumpet of the Judgment shall one day summon you to hear the blessed sentence: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from all eternity." Amen.

THE EPIPHANY.

EVEN from amid the obscurity in which Christ chose to be born, there could not but flash out upon the world, of which He was the Master, some gleam to light up the birth of the Infant Saviour, and to show that, Child though He was, with all the touching helplessness of infancy, yet He was something different from any child of Adam, that God had ever given into the arms of a human mother. He came weak and helpless, an infant and a pauper—not even sheltered from the blasts of winter—but, nevertheless, He was the Son of God, and His birth was the greatest event that ever happened, or that ever can happen, in the history of the world; and, accordingly, it is in no way wonderful that many a strange movement and unwonted stir should take place around His very cradle.

Christ, the long-expected, had come at last, and, as might naturally have been expected, heaven and earth were moved. The power of God broke loose, as it were, from the limitation of the ordinary laws by which He is usually pleased to restrict its manifestations. God's power, as it were, burst forth irrepressibly, and flooded that holy eastern land with wonders and with signs. Heaven and earth seemed to be brought closer together than they had ever been since that brief bright day, when God walked with Adam and Eve through the fresh flowers of Paradise. Angels left the calm beatitude of heaven to busy themselves, at God's behest, about the affairs of men. There had been a song of jubilee, that made the moonlit stillness of the shepherd's night-watch, tremble with the melodies of angelic choirs. An angel had stood by Zachary in the Holy Place, and Elizabeth in her old age had borne a son, whose one business in life it was to go before Jesus, and give testimony of Him.

But all these signs have this in common, that, like most of God's direct dealing with men for some thousands of years, they took place in the bosom of one nation, and with special reference to the Jewish people. Hitherto God had been as a stranger in the greater part of His own world. Sin had encroached on His dominion; it gradually drove Him away from nation after nation, and at length seemed as if it would push Him utterly —His name and His law, His reverence and His love—from the world itself. And then God had been forced, as if in self-defense, to draw closer the limits of His kingdom. He would, as it were, let the faithless world wander away into whatever paths of ignorance and error its folly pointed out; and He would form for Himself one small nation of chosen people, to be, as it were, the salt of the corrupted earth; and He would hedge it round with jealous ordinances from the Gentile races of the world; and He would speak directly to it, and would give it leaders and kings and prophets; and in due time would find the blossom of the race in Mary, and would make her the mother of His Son.

Hence, up to this, the Jews were God's chosen people, and amongst them the Saviour was born.

Amongst them, but not for them alone. The mercy of God was wider than the world, however sinful the world was. Though men had forgotten God, God had not forgotten them: and this Jewish Child who was born to be a Saviour, was to be the Saviour, not of Jew alone, but of Gentile, of every race, and tribe, and tongue, under the broad canopy of the merciful heaven.

And in the Gospel I have read for you, and in the mystery which we celebrate to-day, God begins to give an indication of His gracious purpose toward the Gentile races of the earth. He begins to send His voice far along the distant paths on which the world had strayed away—begins to flash the light of His mercy and His love through the darkness in which their wickedness had cast them. He begins to call the Gentiles to the feet of Jesus.

And the way of it was this. There appeared like some strange vision in the streets of Jerusalem three men, whose garb and bearing betokened that they came from some far eastern land. They bore upon them the marks of long travel, but there was something in their bearing that, travel-stained and toil-worn though they were, proclaimed them chiefs of men—and the Scripture gives them the name of kings—and they told a wonderful tale: that, in the bosom of their people, had lain for many a century a tradition that One would be born a Saviour, and that a star would rise in heaven to announce His coming. And at length the hand of God sent the long-looked-for star flashing in their eastern skies; and at once, drawn by the inspiring grace of God, they left their homes, and journeyed through many a wild waste place; and the star went before them always till it led them to Jerusalem; and there the one question they had to ask was this: "Where is He that is born," etc. And the news was brought to Herod; and Herod was troubled in mind. He was King of the Jews, and here was rumor of some Child he knew not, who would wrench the sceptre from his hand, and leave him crownless. And from his trouble sprang a wicked and crafty design. He would find out this Child, and, having found Him, he would, without pity, cut off the young life that threatened to destroy his power. The chief priests and scribes were called together, and the sacred books were opened, and with certain voice they proclaimed that Bethlehem was the place to seek the newly-born King. The words of indication were plain: "And thou, Bethlehem," etc.

And so, the three wise kings hastened forward to Bethlehem, and found the Child; and their eyes, lit by faith, pierced beneath the surface, and they recognized in Him the King who was to rule, the God who was to be adored, and the Man who was in the after-time to suffer and to die. For this is the meaning of their gifts—gold, to acknowledge His kingship; frankincense, to recognize His divinity; and myrrh, used in embalming bodies, to betoken His suffering humanity.

Now, my brethren, these kings on this occasion represented us, for we, too, are of Gentile race; they made the offerings in our name eighteen hundred years ago, anticipating the time when we could make for ourselves the offerings of which their offerings were but a figure. The time has come. We, born in the Catholic Church, find Jesus from our very infancy. A few days ago we celebrated with joy the birthday of our Incarnate Lord. The kings have gone to their rest many a long year: we are in their place to-day. And shall we let the occasion pass without making to the Infant Jesus the offerings for which He stretches out His hands?

Gold—shall we give gold? Ah! gold is perishable, and Jesus has chosen to be poor; earthly gold He does not need nor care for. But there is gold He wants. He wants the gold of our heart's best love. This is a treasure that God has put into every human heart. And the noblest heart that ever beat in human breast, has nothing greater to give to man or God than the priceless gold of its affection. This is the first gift Jesus asks of you—the gift of your love. And what incense shall we offer to Him who is our God? What, think you, is the most grateful incense that goes up from this earth to the throne of God? It is the incense of the prayers of the hearts that love Him. Offer Him this—the prayer of adoration, by which we acknowledge Him as our God, the prayer of petition, by which to supply our wants, the prayer of thanksgiving, by which we show our gratitude for the countless favors He has lavished upon us.

These two gifts shall be offered to God by His elect, both for time and eternity. Love and prayer will be the eternal business of the saints of God.

But here on this earth another gift is needed to make us saints: for, we have not only a soul, but a body, and a body that, with its depraved senses, makes war against the soul; the body that first corrupts itself, and then extends its corruption to the soul. That body we must save from corruption by the third offering of myrrh, the myrrh of mortification; denying ourselves first what is unlawful, and even in many things denying ourselves what is lawful, that we may keep a firmer hold upon the passions which, unless kept in check, would overrun and lay waste our whole spiritual life.

EASTER SUNDAY.

BUT a little while ago, the eyes of the Church were filled with tears, and fixed upon the figure of the dead Christ; but to-day her tears are tears of joy and she is glad of heart because He has arisen from the dead. But a little while ago, and sin had done its worst. It had arisen against God, and as far as men could see, had conquered, and He that was sinless lay dead amongst the people. But to our Blessed Lord the hour that seemed to be the hour of defeat was the hour of victory; death, whose fateful hand beckons men silently away from the paths of their ambition, was to Him the occasion of His greatest glory; and the grave, that hides away the hopes and the designs of men, was to Him the beginning of everlasting honor. When the dreadful scenes of the Passion had been enacted; when Jesus stood bruised and pale before the people; when they saw upon His sacred flesh the cruel disfigurement which the scourge had left, and traced upon His pallid brow the bloody pressure of the thorny crown; when they saw His hands and feet dug with rough nails, and His wounded body stretched upon the gibbet; when they wagged their heads in scorn, and bent the knee in mockery before the expiring Saviour, well might they have imagined that His history was closed forever. But no; the end was not yet. His disciples laid Him in the tomb, but on the tomb they wrote no epitaph. Go into some burial-place reserved for the illustrious dead; tread lightly and with awe, above the dust of buried greatness, read upon the tombs the record of the names that shall live through many an age upon the lips of men, but read, too, at the beginning of every record, the inevitable words, " here lies the body," and then you will know that the stone, on which their deeds of greatness are inscribed, covers the mouldering dust of the hearts that prompted their designs, and of the hands that achieved their greatness.

But go on the Easter morning to the tomb of Jesus, behold the stone rolled back, and hear the angel speak *His* epitaph, " He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid Him."

And, now, let us lift up our hearts to celebrate this glorious mystery, and may God whose glory and omnipotence are revealed in the Resurrection, touch our lips with fire from the altar, that we may proclaim His praise, and open our hearts to receive the lessons which are taught by this, the greatest of Christian mysteries.

But in what spirit shall we come to celebrate this glorious festival? Surely, in the spirit of Christian joy and Christian gladness. But in all our joy, let us not forget that spirit that must ever mingle largely, with even the holiest gladness of the soldiers of Christ, the spirit of heartfelt penitence and deep contrition. We must go to the tomb of the risen Jesus in company with Magdalen the penitent. We should remember that, if Jesus rose from the dead, it was because of our sins He died. Listen to the angel's words, " Behold the place where they laid Him." Look back to Calvary, reddened with His sacred blood, to the hall of Pilate where He stood crowned with thorns, to the lonely garden where He lay amid the olives, crushed to the blood-stained earth by the sins of men. Yes, all this our sins have done. Behold the place where they laid Him, and, with tears of sorrow mingling with our joy, let the cry go up, even on to-day, from each penitent heart, " God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Looking now to the resurrection of our Saviour, I find that in this glorious mystery are contained two pledges: (1) the pledge of the Church's triumph, and (2) the pledge of the fulfilment of the Christian's hopes, the foundation of the power by which the followers of Christ conquered an unbelieving world; and the foundation of the blessed hope that in the last day we, too, shall arise, and in our flesh shall see God.

(1) The resurrection was the pledge of the triumph of the Church. It proves that Christ is God; that He whom they crucified was the Son of the Most High; that the fire which He came to cast upon the earth was fire from heaven; that the doctrines which He announced, bore upon them the stamp and seal of divine authority. Many a wonderful miracle had Jesus wrought in the course of His public ministry. Healing went out from the very hem of His garment, and His voice had power over the devils who tormented the possessed. He had made the blind to see, and the dumb to speak, nay, He had broken down the barrier that sunders the living and the dead, and brought back souls, who had gone upon that journey whence none return, save by the high command of God. But great though these miracles were, though each was of itself sufficient to prove the divinity of His mission, yet not upon these did He choose to rest the proof. He appealed once and again to the fact that He would arise from the dead; and on this was He content to rest the assertion of His divinity.

Here, then, is the hinge on which turns the Christian's faith, the foundation on which rests the doctrine of the Church; and so true is this, that St. Paul does not hesitate to say, " If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain." Nor is it wonderful that it should be so. Surely, in the stupendous fact of resurrection from the dead all must recognize the hand of Him who is Omnipotent. Great is the power of man, wonderful his skill; but they have their clearly ascertained limits. Men have power upon the earth, and have used it with wonderful results; they have drawn her cherished secrets from nature, and have forced the unstable elements to reveal the laws by which they are governed; but one thing man cannot do, he cannot lift his dead hand amid the grave-clothes, nor bring back the tide of blood to the pulseless heart that has gone silent to the touch of death. Only God can do this. Christ, then, by raising Himself from the dead, proved Himself God, vindicated His claim to the divinity, put upon His mission the stamp and seal of Divine Omnipotence, and supplied His apostles with a guarantee which none might question, of the truth of the message they announced.

Armed with this sacred truth, the followers of the risen Jesus went forth to bear His name to the limits of the habitable earth. It was a wonderful thing to see. Twelve poor men, destitute of the world's riches, unskilled in the world's learning, go forth to conquer the world. They preached a crucified Saviour, but they preached, too, a Saviour who had arisen from the dead, and who sitteth forever at the right hand of the Eternal God. And the power of God went with them, supplying the want of learning and of wealth, and the sound of their voices went forth to the ends of the earth. Men began to feel that there was abroad a mysterious influence which they could not understand, but which mastered the keen intellect and bent the stubborn will. The new doctrines, strong with the strength of truth, and attractive by their intrinsic beauty, won upon the hearts of men. They stole upon the world like strains of half-forgotten music, and hearts that had been steeped in worldliness recognized their teaching as divine, and so the banner of the risen Jesus was borne through the world. But not in peace. Our Blessed Lord had predicted: "The world will hate you even as it hated me"; and His words began to be fulfilled. The banner was borne in triumph, but the song of victory was a cry of battle, and the feet of those who marched in that procession were red with the blood of martyrs. And so it has been since, a story of conflict and a story of victory. The religion of the risen Jesus has gone onward through the world, conquering and to conquer. The Church took up what civilization she found, and left a mark on it, which even her deadliest enemies must acknowledge to be ineffaceable. She took the rude barbarians who were laying Europe desolate, and she moulded them into a Christian people, with a strong hand and a determined purpose. North and south, east and west, her footstep passed with a music like the tramp of armies, and a success that could only come from the God of Battles. She has seen kingdoms rise and rule and perish, and yet she grows not old; she has seen histories begun and finished, and yet she has not failed. Many a relentless foe has she seen encountered; she has survived their fall. She has carried the name of Jesus to every land. Yes, Jesus has triumphed; go now, after eighteen hundred years, to the grave, where His enemies imagined that they had buried His influence and His power; lo! He is risen, He is not there, He has gone forth through the world, His power has passed upon every nation, His influence on every heart, His cross is high above a thousand altars, and to-day His followers, counted by millions, celebrate the glories of His resurrection.

(2) But the resurrection is not alone the pledge of the triumph of the Church, it is also a pledge of the triumph of the individual Christian. For, as Jesus died to save us from sin and death, so has He arisen that we, too, may share the glory of His resurrection. It is the cause and the model of the resurrection of His saints; the cause, inasmuch as it is the same omnipotence by which He raised Himself from the dead, that shall draw the bodies of His saints from the dust into which they have returned; the model, because, as He rose from the dead glorious and immortal, and, being risen, dieth now no more, so shall we, if we comply with the conditions which He established, rise clothed again with our bodies, and in our flesh we shall see God. And oh! what consolation is here. You may be poor and miserable, your path through life may lead through many sorrows, the hard world may press heavily on your weary hearts. But the world and the things of the world pass very quickly away; life is but a troubled dream of which death will be the awakening. Your souls will go into the house of their eternity, your bodies will moulder in the grave; but if you pass from life in the friendship of God, as surely as Jesus has arisen from the tomb, so surely God will guard your mouldering dust; and when the angel's trump of doom shall quicken the dead world, you will rise like Jesus, glorious and immortal, and in your flesh you shall see God.

But if you would have part in the glory of the resurrection, two things must first be done. You must rise from the death of sin to the life of grace, and being risen, you must die no more, but persevere to the end.

There are times when the voice of gladness is simply unbearable. When sorrow has fallen upon us, when death has visited our homes and made them desolate; oh! then, we fain would shut our ears against the sound of gladness. In the midst of our affliction we think it strange that others can rejoice; we have no part in their rejoicing, nay, we almost wonder how the sun can shine, and how the earth can look so beautiful, while we sit alone with the sorrow that has come upon us. But oh! is there any one here still buried in the grave of sin? Is there one amongst you on this Easter day, sitting apart under the shadow of iniquity, listening, as from a long distance, to the voice of exultation that the Church is sending up to heaven? Oh! poor miserable soul, how can he have any part in such rejoicing? For him there is no joy, no peace, no rest, no gladness. He is bound by the chain of sin, he is wrapped in the shroud of death, step by step he is coming nearer to an unholy grave; hour hands him on to hour in his fatal march upon the road to hell. The world may go well with him, all his schemes succeed, he may have plenty in his house and comfort at his hearth; he may have wealth and friends and honor; he may be looked up to as a useful member of society, a careful father, a kind husband, a generous, large-hearted friend. But what of all these things if sin be there? It eats like a canker into the generous heart, and spoils the merit of the open hand. He is but a whited sepulchre, whiteness without, but rottenness and corruption within, and when he dies, when the large heart goes silent, when the open hand lies motionless in the coffin, while men speak his praise who knew not the secret of his sinful heart, while the care of sorrow falls on his dead face, even at that hour his soul is buried in hell. Oh! do not deceive yourselves; for him who remains in mortal sin Christ has not risen. He may deceive himself, and strive to fill his empty heart with the paltry pleasures that the world offers. He may shut his ears to the voice of God, he may purchase the delusive peace that comes from the forcible stifling of the voice of conscience, but oh! at what a price! at the fearful cost of his immortal soul. He may sleep for a time, but one day there must come an awakening, and there shall be peace no more. The sinner, too, must die, and the vices of his youth shall go down with him to the grave, and they shall sleep with him in the dust. Clothed with his iniquity as with a garment, he must one day stand before his Judge, and hear the dreadful sentence. Oh! be wise in time, rise from the death of sin, and then you may celebrate, with heartfelt joy, the resurrection of your Saviour.

But it is not enough to place ourselves in the state of grace; one other thing is necessary—we must persevere to the end. Only to him who perseveres has the crown been promised; and at this hour there is many a soul in hell that often knelt before God's altar in deep contrition, that often whispered its tale of guilt into the ear of the minister of God, and departed, giving joy over sin forgiven, to the angels of heaven. But oh! they did not persevere. The time came when they turned aside and gave the battle up. And now, ruined and lost forever, they look back in despair to the days when salvation was in their hands, and they cast it from them.

Oh! persevere. What avails it to have fought through the long day, if night closes on disaster and defeat? What matters it to the soldier to have fought through the battle, if, in the end, he is ruined and overthrown? When he lies stiff and stark with his dead face turned to the silent stars, what boots it that he went forth at morning high-hearted and hopeful? But in the world's battles defeat does not necessarily imply disgrace, nor need defeat bring with it aught of dishonor. We may honor the dead soldier though his cause be lost, and recognize his bravery even through the shadows of defeat. But in the fight for eternal salvation the case is far otherwise; there defeat means everlasting misery, there ruin is ruin irreparable, and he who in that great battle loses at the last shall lie forever in flames of hell, looking up in vain to the heaven he shall never enter, and blaspheming the God whose face he shall never, never see.

But with us, please God, it shall not be so. We shall run in the race so as to win, and fight the battle so as to be crowned with victory. To do so, we have the highest motive, and the most powerful means. What motive can be more inspiring than the thought that we have been called to participate in the glory of our Blessed Lord's resurrection; that, no matter what may be our condition here, a crown has been prepared for us in heaven; that, though we shall soon pass away from earth, though our place shall know us no more, though our bodies shall return to the dust from whence they came, yet, if we be faithful to the end, as surely as Jesus sitteth at this hour at the right hand of God, so surely shall we share His everlasting glory? And the means are ready to our hand. Jesus has died for us. He has placed at our disposal the chalice of His sacred blood to purchase our salvation. His ear is open to our prayers; His sacraments are ready to supply our every want and to heal our every wound; He has given His own beloved Mother to be our Mother also. Oh! if we but use these means, death shall find us ready. We shall rise with Jesus, and, like Him, we shall die no more, and when the silent finger of death shall beckon us away from the ranks of the living, we, too may cry out with the patriarch of old: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in the last day I am to rise out of the earth, and in my flesh I shall see my God."

PENTECOST.

> "And when the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."—ACTS ii.

WHEN we look abroad upon a mighty kingdom that rules from sea to sea, when we behold on every side evidences of its greatness and stability, when we contemplate the wisdom of its institutions and the happiness of its people, when we find that genius, and learning, and taste—the wealth of human intellect and the poetry of human feeling—have all been lavished to build up and to adorn and to make as nearly perfect as the work of human hands can be, the vast fabric of its greatness, we find rising within us a desire to trace it back to the remote antiquity of its origin. We would fain make, as it were, a pilgrimage to the cradle of a race that has carved out for itself such a destiny as this. We would trace back to its first faint source the river of national life that has rolled so grandly through the centuries, and worn for itself so deep and broad a channel in the course of human history. We would fain behold the institutions in their germs, that have since expanded into growth so magnificent and so beautiful. But how much more will this instinct find to awaken its energy, in the spectacle of such a mighty kingdom as the Church of God, of which we, by God's grace, are members, and whose long glories are our very own. For never yet was seen on earth a kingdom such as this; never was wisdom so perfect, sway so boundless, stability so absolutely secure. And it is our happy privilege to-day, guided by the liturgy of the Church, to go back to what we may well call the inauguration of her power on the day of Pentecost.

Our Blessed Lord had appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, and had discoursed with them about the Kingdom of God—the Church which He had purchased by His blood. In those mysterious walks by the Sea of Tiberias He had delivered to them, so to speak, the constitution of his newly-established kingdom, and had commissioned them to preach the Gospel "to every creature."

But when forty days had come and gone, He went up, and the heavens opened, and the clouds closed over the glory of His passing, and they that loved Him, saw Him no more. They were left alone, left to recall half sadly the features of that glorious face, and to feed upon the memory of that tender heart. They were left, so to speak, desolate upon the dreary world, and it is no wonder they stood, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "looking up to heaven," as realizing sadly that earth could never be a home to them again, now that it was no longer gladdened by His divine beauty. Desolate they stood, and yet *not* desolate, for He had left them a sacred promise. He had told them in words which He had repeated more than once, on which He had insisted with loving emphasis: "It is expedient for you that I go, for if I do not go the Paraclete will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, being come, will teach you all truth."

The Apostles went back to Jerusalem to await the fulfilment of the promise. They were men on whom had been imposed a task before which the boldest spirit might have quailed, the loftiest genius shrunk abashed, for it was no less a task than the conquest of a world. Their mission was "to every creature," the limit of their labors the bounds of the habitable world. And, in truth, they were not men of bold spirit, or keen intellect, or lofty genius. They were without learning, without power, without influence. They had been taken from the lowest ranks of society; and there is nothing to lead us to suppose that they had not much of the ignorance, much of the prejudice, much of the narrowness of mind that was common in the class from which they sprang. How were such men as these to win over a luxurious and vicious world, to a religion that makes the daily carrying of the Cross its indispensable condition? Humanly speaking, they were not fitted; but He who needs no instruments can make use even of the weakest to effect His purpose. He gave His Apostles a mission, and He equipped them for the warfare, not with the weapons which human prudence might have deemed essential, but by a personal communication of the Holy Ghost.

From that "upper room" in Jerusalem a power went forth, such as earth had never seen before. The Church went onward through the world, conquering and to conquer, with a footstep like the tramp of armies, and a success that could come only from the God of Battles. A spirit of life breathed upon the corruption of pagan society, and voices from the catacombs penetrated the chambers of pagan palaces. In time she came forth from those recesses where, in days of peril, her children had found at once a home, a temple, and a grave, and she saw the rulers of haughty Rome fling down their diadems in the dust before the shrines of her martyred saints. She took the rude barbarians who were laying

Europe desolate, and she moulded them into a Christian people, with a strong hand and a determined purpose. She has seen centuries pass by, and yet she grows not old; she has seen kingdoms rise, and rule, and perish, and yet she has not failed; her footsteps hath passed on every land, her influence on every people, and to-day the voice of an old man, the successor of St. Peter, whose throne is raised above the dust of saints, can speak with irresistible and unresisted authority to the hearts and consciences of multitudes.

Our first duty on a festival like this, is to unite with the Church in giving glory to God, for the great things He has done in favor of His Church, in the wonderful mystery we celebrate to-day. But if we would celebrate it worthily, we must do more than this.

The Church, when she proclaims a festival, when she sends forth through all her wide domains a mandate to her children to rejoice in her joy, which is their own—when she lights her lights and burns her incense, and puts forth the resources of her magnificent ritual—the Church has it in purpose that we, her children, should do something more than fill our eye, and please our fancy, and gratify our taste, be something more than mere lookers-on at a gorgeous pageant, or even than grateful admirers of the glory of the past. There is ever in the festivals she proposes a something, a lesson, a suggestion, an example, which has a personal concern for ourselves, and bears upon the needful business of our own spiritual life. Let us see what, in the present instance, the lesson is.

The great and special favors which God has bestowed upon His Church find, so to speak, their counterparts in His dealing with the individual soul. As the mission of the Holy Ghost was to the Church, so to each of us individually, the same Holy Spirit has a mission also.

We remark here two things of His coming—first, He came to teach all truth; second, since the Church was to be for all ages, He is to remain with her forever.

Turning now to our individual selves—the Holy Ghost is our teacher: He enlightens our intellect, strengthens our will, discloses to us the order of God's law, and the freedom of God's service—gives us the grace to make our knowledge profit us to works of sanctification, and enables us to persevere to the end. *Our* duty plainly is: (1) to prepare our hearts for His coming; (2) to receive with docility, and carry out with fidelity, the lessons He imparts to us by His inspirations, and (3) to persevere to the end.

(1). First, then, this preparation—how shall it be made? "They went up into an upper room, and all these were persevering in one mind, in prayer." So did the Apostles; and if we wish to receive the Holy Ghost we must prepare our hearts by retirement and prayer. "I will lead her," said the Holy Ghost, "into solitude, and *there* I will speak to her heart." Now, by retirement I do not mean mere physical withdrawal from the resorts of men. It is unfortunately too true that we may bring with us a world of worldly thoughts even into the solitude of a cloister. I mean, rather, that withdrawal of the thoughts and the affections from the things of earth, which results in that spirit of recollection which we may call the silence of the heart. Even in the material world, as if God wished to give us a constant lesson, silence usually attends upon, as it were, the condition of the most perfect power. What rules so widely as the light, and yet, what ever comes so quietly as the silent footsteps of the dawn? The trees grow, the flowers bloom, the stars move on through heaven, the forces of nature do their appointed tasks, and all in silence.

And so it is, too, in the spiritual world. In the sanctification of a soul, which is a far greater work than the creation of a world, the Holy Ghost seems to demand silence and recollection as the indispensable conditions of His operation. And from silence and recollection springs necessarily, prayer. Prayer, that reaches from earth to heaven, and places at the disposal of the weak whisper of a sinner's heart the very omnipotence of God.

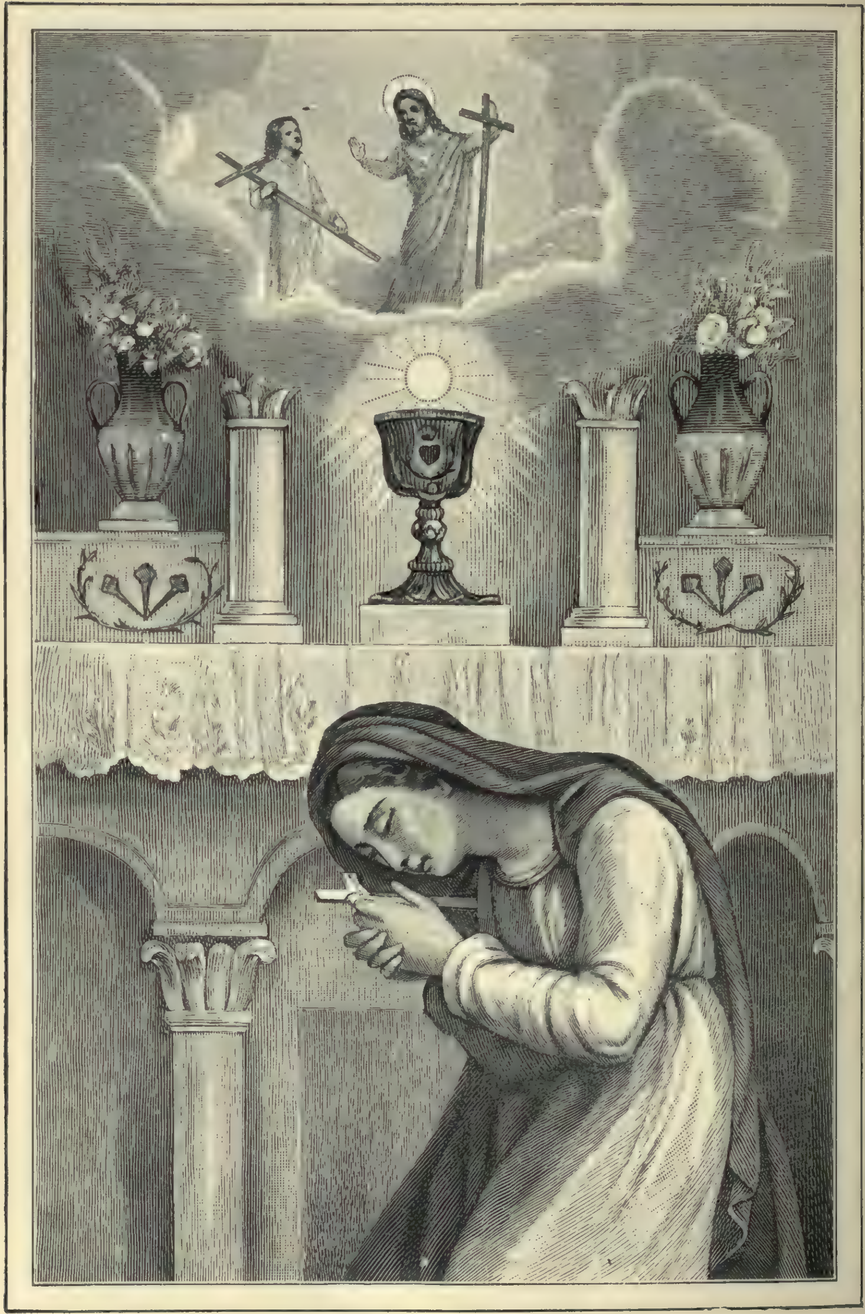
(2). In the next place we must receive and put in practice the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. You have been placed in a singularly favorable position for the unimpeded operations of the Holy Spirit. First, He has enlightened you by faith, and placed you in the bosom of His Church. He has given you a knowledge of His law; and when your lives proclaimed before Him that you kept His commandments, He made known to you that He wanted something more. You heard within your hearts a voice that said, "Leave all and follow me," and you came and enlisted under the higher law of the evangelical counsels. Be thankful for this special grace. "*Non fecit taliter omni nationi*"—not to every one has it been given to hear that invitation which God addresses to those of His special friends and faithful servants whom He wishes to make a people apart. It remains with you, by God's grace, to carry out the vocation you have received. Do you ask me how? I answer in a word—by faithfully observing the holy rule which, as a sweet yoke and a light burden, God has given you the privilege to live under.

(3). But there is one thing more—the crowning of the work—we must persevere. What will avail the graces we have received, the lights which have enlightened us, the good works, the fasting, and the prayer, nay, the very sacraments of Christ, if, in the end, not persevering, we should lose our souls? What boots it to have fought through the longest day, if night closes around disaster and defeat? When the dead soldier lies stark and cold, with his white face turned to the silent stars, what matters it that he marched forth at morning, high-hearted and hopeful? But in earthly battles defeat does not necessarily imply disgrace. We may honor the dead soldier though his cause be lost, and recognize his bravery even through the shadows of defeat. But in the fight for eternal salvation the case is far otherwise. There, defeat must mean eternal ruin and eternal loss. He who, at the last, shall lose in that great battle, shall lie forever in the depths of hell, tortured by the flames around him, but tortured far more by the memory of long-gone hopes, that once were ready at a touch of grace to blossom into fulfilment, and ripen into the fruit of everlasting life, but which withered and died and were made vain, in the deadly atmosphere of unrepented sin.

Ask, then, the grace of final perseverance for yourselves and for your brethren. May God grant it—to me who speak, and to you who listen, that enlightened by the Holy Spirit, corresponding with His inspirations, knowing through Him the will of God, and doing it with all our might, and so persevering to the end, we may one day, in God's good time, find ourselves with the saints who have gone before, keeping Pentecost in heaven. Amen.

REVEREND PATRICK O'KEEFFE.

Reverend PATRICK O'KEEFFE, of the Archdiocese of Cashel, Ireland, is popularly esteemed as the author of "Moral Discourses" and "Sermons at Mass," from which works the following discourses are selected.



At the Foot of the Tabernacle.

ON RASH JUDGMENT.

> "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, *thinketh no evil.*"—1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, etc.

THE law of fraternal charity strictly forbids us to injure our neighbor: first, in the estimation of others, as is done by calumny or detraction; and, secondly, it forbids us to injure him in the estimation of ourselves. We injure the neighbor in our own estimation when, by rash judgment, we hastily, and without sufficient grounds, think evil of him, or form a bad opinion of him. He may be as anxious to stand well in *our* estimation as in that of any one else.

The sin of rash judgment is committed in several ways: 1°. When we judge ill of any one at first sight, and form a bad opinion of him from his mere words or outward appearance. 2°. When we ascribe to a bad intention any good, or indifferent, or apparently bad act performed by our neighbor. 3°. When, from one sin which we see our neighbor commit, we at once conclude he is addicted to that sin. 4°. When we judge that, because he is addicted to a certain sin or vice, he is, therefore, certain to be lost and sent to hell. 5°. When we hastily condemn our neighbor, and do so without first taking the trouble of considering what might be said in his defense.

The sin of rash judgment is greater or less in proportion to the matter upon which we form the judgment, and the nature of the ground, or evidence, whether strong or weak, upon which we form that judgment. Hence, if we form a rash judgment of a particular person known to us, in any serious matter, we commit a mortal sin. Ah! my brethren, if this be so, as it is, I fear our mortal sins of rash judgment are beyond counting. I fear that we have never done sufficient penance for them. They may be unseen by men, but are they unseen by God? We should not think evil of any one, let him be ever so unworthy; nor can we do so without God seeing us, for our most secret thoughts, no less than our public actions, are open as the noonday to God. "Detract not the king, no, not in *thy thoughts*, and speak not evil of the rich man in thy private chamber: because even the birds of the air will carry thy voice, and he that hath wings will tell what thou hast said" (Eccles. x. 20).

Do those who profess to do things above board, give way to rash judgment under board? Is God likely to be satisfied with such judgment?

Rash judgment is a common sin: it is to be found in all ranks and classes of society. The man who gives way to rash judgment is, as a rule, a man of a corrupt heart and a crooked mind. He looks at others through the distorted medium of self. A man with jaundiced eyes thinks everything he sees is yellow. If you look through green spectacles everything will appear green; if through black spectacles, everything will appear black. If you look through a distorted medium, everything will appear crooked. As a man's own mind is, such is the judgment he is likely to form of his neighbor. Hence, a robber thinks every man else is a robber. As the Scripture says: "The fool when he walketh in the way, whereas he himself is a fool, esteemeth all men fools" (Eccles. x. 3).

The evil which you rashly judge to be in the heart of another may not be there at all; but, whether it is or not, by your act of rash judgment you show it certainly exists in your own heart. Like begets like. "Wherefore," says St. Paul, "thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For, wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou dost *the same things* which thou judgest" (Rom. ii. 1). At least you do the same things in *thought*, and God condemns sinful thoughts as well as sinful acts.

Rash judgments usually commence with suspicions. How given to suspicions some persons are! You can scarcely say or do anything, good, bad, or indifferent, but they will put evil constructions of their own upon it. St. Augustine, in his beautiful book on "Friendship," chap. xxiv., says: "Above all things, take care you admit no suspicions into your mind, because they are the poison of friendship." And St. Bonaventure calls suspicions "a secret plague, but a very dangerous one; because it drives God far from us, and tears in pieces fraternal charity."

Whenever, then, you hear rumors or stories, however plausible, against your neighbor, do not rush at once to condemn him, but, as a wise and charitable man, carefully suspend your judgment. Do unto him as you would wish to have done to yourself. Wait till you examine into all the circumstances, for the slightest circumstance may alter the whole case. Perhaps the charge against your neighbor may originate from malice, or from resentment, or mistake. "Hear the other side" is a maxim received by all wise and Christian men. It is easy to err in judging our neighbor. Susannah, and Joseph, and Magdalene, and the Publican were *apparently* guilty, and yet, at that very time, they were really innocent before the Lord. Was not there rash judgment formed against our blessed Lord Himself!

Appearances are often deceptive. Even the appearances of good, as well as those of bad, are deceptive, and this is specially true when a man is found who has the name of being "very good" and "very pious," etc., and yet, after all, is one who, to the certain knowledge of God, unfortunately falls into the sin of rash judgment. No man is spotless that commits this sin, even though he were "Simon Pure" in his own estimation.

To pronounce correctly upon the goodness or badness of our neighbor's act, it is necessary that we see his intention, for it is the intention that gives character to the act; but we cannot possibly see the intention, and, therefore, the difficulty of ever "thinking evil" of our neighbor, without falling into rash judgment and violating charity. "I (and I alone) am the Lord who search the heart and try the reins" (Jer. xvii.). If, however, we cannot excuse the act, we can, and should, in charity, excuse the intention, or, at least, attribute the act to human frailty, or to some violent temptation. Those are lifeless who are faultless.

We always try to excuse those whom we really love; therefore, when we condemn our neighbor by rash judgment, we show that we have no real Christian love for him, and, consequently, we stand convicted as criminals, deserving nothing less than eternal death; for, says St. John: "He that loveth not, abideth in death" (1 John iii. 14).

Every man sets a value upon his character. There is no man that has not got a right to his character, and hence, to deprive him of it, by rash judgment, would be to commit an act of injustice. How angry God must feel toward that man, then, who, without sufficient reason, or a shred of authority, takes the statue of his neighbor from its rightful place in the halls of charity and dashes it into atoms!

But, my brethren, by rash judgment you do injury not only to your neighbor, the work of God, but you do injury to God Himself; for, by judging your neighbor, you thereby usurp the Divine jurisdiction: you take the authority out of God's hands! God can bear anything but this. He has reserved exclusively to Himself three things: His honor, His revenge, and His judgment. The right of judging each and every man's heart He will not give to man. Even Christ Himself, *as man*, had not the right of judging men. He had it only as "given to" Him by His Eternal Father (John v. 23).

As with the Tree of Knowledge, so with the right of judging our neighbor: God will not allow us to touch it, or to meddle with it at all.

Of course, Almighty God has established an external court of judicature for the purpose of promoting public peace and justice; and He has established, also, an internal court of penance; but, besides these two, He has established no other. And, accordingly, He gives no authority whatsoever to any man, in His individual capacity, to judge his neighbor.

God is the Divine Master: every man is His servant, and is His servant in the truest and highest sense to God *only*. But, "who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own Lord he standeth or falleth" (Rom. xiv. 4). On the Day of Judgment, but not till then, shall we know with certainty who was good and who was bad. Though our neighbor were really guilty, we are not permitted to judge until then. "Therefore," says St. Paul, "judge not before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. iv. 5).

St. Anastatius, the Sinaite, says that: "Whoever judges before the coming of Christ is Antichrist, because he usurps the authority of Christ!"

Ah! my brethren, what is this you are doing when you commit the sin of rash judgment? Does your knowledge, or your wisdom, or pretended zeal for religion, or your piety (?) authorize you to steal the authority from the Judge, and to trample under foot the beautiful and tender flower of fraternal charity?

My brethren, "charity thinketh no evil": why, then, should you think evil of your neighbor? Have you not enough of evil in yourselves to "think" over and to root out? Hypocrite, why not remove the beam out of your own eye? Why not practice what you preach? Physician, why not cure thyself first?

"In judging others a man labors in vain, often errs, and easily sins; but, in judging and looking into himself, he always labors with fruit" ("Imit. of Christ," chap. xiv.).

My brethren, it is particularly dangerous to judge others; for our judgment of them shall be made the rule by which God will judge ourselves: "With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged" (Matt. vii. 2). "Condemn not and you shall not be condemned" (Luke vi. 36). This means that, if you, by rash judgment, condemn others, God will also condemn you.

Let us frequently pray to God to deliver us from falling into the dreadful sin of rash judgment. Let us pray, also, that God would protect us from being the subjects and the victims of the rash judgment in others. Let us ask of God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to always regard the judgments of men as St. Paul regarded them: "But, to me," said he, "it is a very small thing to be judged by you" (1 Cor. iv. 3). Amen.

ON OATHS.

"And thou shalt swear: As the Lord liveth, in truth, and in judgment, and in justice"—JEREMIAS iv. 2.

AND this is growing to be such a great age for swearing and rushing into law courts, it may be well for all to know what an oath is, and what the conditions are for taking a lawful oath. By an oath is meant calling God to witness the truth of what we assert, or to witness our sincerity in what we promise. An oath is a sacred method for ascertaining the truth, and thereby putting an end to disputes: "For men swear by one greater than themselves: and an *oath for confirmation* is the end of all their controversy" (Heb. vi. 16).

Oaths were introduced not at the commencement of the world, but long after, when the people gave themselves up to vice and disorder and confusion and lies of every kind. And when no man could any longer believe the simple word of his fellow-man, then it was that oaths were instituted, and God was invoked as a witness. The Wickliffites, Quakers, and other dissenters, wrongly condemn the use of oaths under any circumstances. Our Lord Himself, the angels, St. Paul, etc., made use of oaths. The Council of Trent says, with regard to an oath, "although in itself good, its frequent use, like medicine, is by no means to be commended—'its frequent use is pernicious.'"

There are three conditions required to make an oath lawful—truth, judgment, and justice. "Thou shalt swear," says the Prophet Jeremias (iv. 2), "as the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in justice." He who takes an oath must believe what he swears is the *truth*, and must believe it upon solid grounds. Does the man who takes a false oath think that God is ignorant and cannot know the truth, or that He will stand as a witness to confirm the falsehood and put His seal upon it? An oath is taken in *justice* when that which is promised on oath is right and lawful and just. To have an oath taken in *judgment*, we must first carefully and duly weigh all the circumstances; and be fully convinced that the whole matter is so clear as to permit an oath, and of such importance as to require one; and, furthermore, that the case cannot be settled otherwise than with an oath. It is then, and only then, that an oath is said to be taken in judgment.

An oath wanting any one of these three conditions—truth, justice, and judgment—is not a lawful oath. Hence, St. Cornelius, Pontiff, decreed that an oath should not be exacted from children before puberty; that is, before they should have attained their twelfth or fourteenth year. For, up to that age, they are not able to know when exactly the circumstances of a case will make it lawful for them to take an oath *in judgment.*

We commit the sin of perjury if we take an oath which we know or think to be false, or even doubt as to whether it be true or false. We commit the sin of perjury also, if, without a just cause, we refuse to fulfil what we have promised on oath.

It is sinful to take an unjust oath, that is, an oath injurious to God, to ourselves, or to our neighbors; and it is more sinful still to keep such an oath. Herod thus sinned when he bound himself by oath to give the daughter of Herodias *whatsoever* she should ask; for, how could he know what unjust or unreasonable thing she might ask? And he sinned again, and far more grievously, when he kept his rash and unjust oath, and ordered the head of St. John the Baptist to be cut off and brought in a dish, as it was, to the damsel, in presence of all who were at supper with him—the princes and tribunes and chief men of Galilee! (St. Mark vi.).

So outrageously offensive to God is the sin of perjury, whereby God is offered as a voucher for an untruth, that He distinctly says He will send His curse to the house of him that takes a false oath. The Prophet Zachary, in his description of the "flying volume," says: "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the earth. . . . . And it shall come to the house of the thief, and to the house of him that *sweareth falsely* by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof" (Zach. v. 2, etc.).

The Church, speaking through Innocent XI., has declared that, to call God to witness even a small or a trivial lie, which does no injury to our neighbor, is a most heinous mortal sin, and that it deserves the everlasting flames of hell!

The Jews wrongfully thought that falsehood was the only thing to be provided against in the taking of oaths, and that an oath might be taken about the most trifling and unimportant matters. And so, like many of the present day, they foolishly thought that they could, without sin, bring others into court and exact oaths from them on the most trifling matters, or in cases that could be settled outside a court without an oath at all.

The Second Commandment of God strictly forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths. Our Lord Himself is quite emphatic on this point. He says: "You have heard that it was said to them of old, 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God: nor by the earth, for it is His footstool: nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be yea, yea; no, no: and that which is over and above these, is of evil" (Matt. v. 33, etc.). Whatever assertion is made "over and above yea, yea; no, no," that is *without necessity* and *upon oath*, "is of evil." "A man that sweareth much shall be filled with iniquity" (Ecclus. xxiii. 12).

Our Lord does not by any means forbid the taking of oaths universally, under any circumstances. On the contrary, He Himself encourages oaths, when there is sufficient reason. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only, and thou shalt *swear* by His name" (Deut. vi. 13). "The king shall rejoice in God, all they shall be *praised*, that *swear* by Him; because the mouth is stopped of them that speak wicked things" (Ps. lxii. 12).

The Council of Trent teaches: "The Lord wished to reprove the perverse opinion of the Jews, by which they had been led to suppose that nothing was to be provided against in the taking of an oath but falsehood. Hence, even on the most trivial and unimportant matters, they themselves very often swore, and exacted an oath from others. This practice the Redeemer reprehends and reprobates, and teaches that, unless *necessity imperatively* demands it, an *oath must be entirely abstained from*" (Cat., Part iii., chap. 3).

Of course, the taking of an oath is quite lawful, whenever there is a just and weighty cause: whenever God's honor, our own or our neighbor's good or necessary defense, or any other just cause may require it. To take an oath about every trifling matter is strictly forbidden, as it is taking the name of the Lord God in vain. It is not treating God with due reverence to call Him down from heaven to witness every little occurrence. False and rash oaths are seldom free from scandal and perjury. "Thou shalt not swear falsely by my name, nor profane the name of thy God" (Lev. xix. 12). "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for he shall not be unpunished that taketh His name upon a vain thing" (Deut. v. 11). We cannot expect to enter heaven unless we keep the commandments; and one of them is: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain."

God does not delight in the punishment or perdition of any one, and yet, so jealous is He of the honor of His name, that He threatens to let no man go "*un*punished" that takes it in vain. Perhaps the various chastisements which we, my brethren, receive every day, come to us from

God on account of our sins of irreverence for the Divine name. Desirous of our salvation, and knowing our proclivity to the commission of this sin of irreverence, and the special enormity of the sin, God in His mercy has employed special threats to put us on our guard, and to prevent us from falling into it. The pastor, therefore, having the responsible charge of souls, could not make use of language too clear or too strong, in urging upon the faithful their duty of paying all possible reverence to the name of God.

My brethren, do you ever think that one or many of the personal quarrels between any two parties in a parish could be settled without having them summoned and brought into a public court-house, and have God also brought down as a witness? Is the fine old Catholic custom, still existing in some parishes, of getting disputes settled by one or more priests, to be commended? A true priest, living in the district and understanding the circumstances, is sure to give justice and fair play at both sides; and what more is wanted? Is it to give edification to heretics and unbelievers?

"Dare any of you," says St. Paul, "having a matter against another, go to be judged, before the unjust, and not before the saints? Know you not that the saints shall judge this world? And if the world shall be judged by you: are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know you not that we shall judge angels? how much more things of this world. If, therefore, you have judgments of things pertaining to this world, set them to judge who are most despised in the Church. I speak to your shame. Is it so that there is not among you any one wise man, that is able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with his brother; and that before unbelievers. Already indeed there is plainly a fault among you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. vi. 1, etc.).

From time immemorial, as recently throughout the days of the National League, in this country especially, whenever a dispute arose, it was referred to the priest, and left to his decision and settlement. Why, then, do you take the matter out of his hands, and run into a court-house with it? Is it to carry out the injunctions of St. Paul? Is it to make little of the priest? Is it to give way to personal resentment? Is it to perpetuate hostilities? or, is it to ruin an opponent, and to blot out a parishioner? When the priest makes peace, he *does* make it; and does so without putting God to the trouble of being used as a witness, or His name taken in vain. The judge never makes peace; attorneys seldom bring profit to any one but themselves; the "peacemakers" *do* bring peace; for God "blesses" their work. Unnecessary law is a withering plague in a parish; it is a disgraceful work; it gives scandal and bad example; it does away with all Christian forgiveness. The witnesses at each side will say that those against them perjured themselves. This will cause serious rash judgments through the parish; and this, in turn, will injure many souls mortally, and open up springs of sin and of scandal over which angels may weep.

A priest, even the humblest in the Church, is able to settle the greatest differences between man and *God:* ought he not, therefore, be able to settle a little difference or dispute between man and a fellow-man?

My brethren, let us thank Almighty God for having given us permission to call upon Him as our witness when we take an oath. And, above all things, let us take special care not to tamper in any way with an oath, or to fail in keeping a lawful oath when once we have taken it. "And thou shalt swear: As the Lord liveth, in truth, and in judgment, and in justice" (Jer. iv. 2). Amen.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

"Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness."—Ephes. v. 2.

THE Catholic Church, my brethren, speaking through the Council of Trent, as through a mouth-piece, commands her preachers, and all others having the care of souls, to explain the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to their people carefully and frequently. Our good Mother, the Church, has made this law, my dear Christians, to the end that we may all know what a great treasure God has left to us in this sublime Sacrifice of the Altar, and what great advantages we may derive from a faithful and devout attendance thereat. The same sweet love for men which pressed our Lord Jesus Christ, in the first instance, to institute this adorable Sacrifice of the New Law, presses Him, also, to desire that its transcendent nature and effects should be made known to the whole world as fully and as clearly as possible. The Sacrifice of the Mass is by far the richest treasure which Christ has left to His Church. Yet, my brethren, there are many persons who treat it with indifference, and take little or no pains to rightly understand its value, or the manifold graces and blessings which it contains. Strange to say, while the great mass of Catholics frequently meditate upon the infinite love of Jesus Christ in instituting the Blessed Eucharist as *a Sacrament*, comparatively few ever reflect upon His equally infinite love in instituting it, also as *a Sacrifice.*

By sacrifice is meant: the external offering to God alone, of some sensible or visible thing, made by a priest, or lawful minister; the partial destruction or total annihilation of the victim being the acknowledgment of Almighty God's supreme dominion over us, and our total dependence on Him. Christian sacrifice cannot be offered to any one but to God alone.

The strongest instincts of nature, my brethren, prompt us to offer sacrifice to the Deity as an essential and acceptable act of religion. Hence, from the commencement of the world, all nations, even the most barbarous and illiterate, have offered sacrifice of one kind or another to the divinities they worshipped. In the Old Law sacrifices of divers kinds were frequently offered to God.

Abel offered sacrifice of "the firstlings of his flock" (Gen. iv.); Noah "built an altar unto the Lord: and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, offered holocausts upon the altar" (Gen. vii.); Melchisedech, "bringing forth bread and wine," offered them in sacrifice, for he was "the priest of the Most High" (Gen. xiv.); Abraham "came to the place which God had shown him, where he built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it: and when he had bound Isaac his son, he laid him on the altar upon the pile of wood, and he put forth his hand, and took the sword, to sacrifice his son. And, behold, an Angel of the Lord from heaven called to him, saying: Abraham, Abraham, ... Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him; now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for my sake. Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw behind his back a ram amongst the briers, sticking fast by the horns, which he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son" (Gen. xxii.). Elias, too, built an altar to the name of the Lord . . . . "and laid the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it upon the wood. . . . . And when it was now time to offer the holocaust, Elias, the prophet, came near, and said: O Lord, God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, show this day that Thou art the God of Israel, and I Thy servant: and that according to Thy commandments I have done all these things. . . . . And when all the people saw this, they fell on their faces, and said: The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God" (3 Kings xviii.)

The sacrifices of the Old Law were, some of them, bloody; others unbloody. The bloody sacrifices consisted chiefly of lambs, oxen, and goats. Sometimes, as in the case of our Lord's presentation, the victims were birds: "They carried him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. . . . . And to offer sacrifice, according as it is written in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons" (Luke ii. 22–24). The unbloody sacrifices were mainly of flour, and wine, and oil, etc. These ancient sacrifices, though offered up by the hands of the holy Patriarchs, had no intrinsic value of their own. They were but *poor and weak elements*, quite incapable of cancelling sin, quite incapable of conferring God's grace upon those who offered them, or upon those for whom they were offered. "For it is impossible," says St. Paul, "that with the blood of oxen and goats, sins should be taken away" (Heb. x. 4). Those sacrifices were but mere types and figures of the true Sacrifice yet to come—that is, of the holy Mass—and it was only as such, that they were in any sense acceptable to God. Compared with the Sacrifice of the Mass, they were but as vague shadows, compared to the solid substance.

II. But, at length, the shadows and symbols have given place to the sublime reality. Moved by an incomparable love for fallen man, the eternal Word of God descended from heaven, was *made flesh, and dwelt amongst us:* He came to offer Himself in sacrifice for our redemption. And, in that eventful hour, all the ancient sacrifices were forever abolished. In view of that divine Victim, they became displeasing (rather than pleasing) to God; the only sacrifice He would consent to accept as worthy of Him was that of His Eternal Son. Our Lord Jesus Christ speaking to His Heavenly Father on this subject, says: "Sacrifices and oblations, and holocausts for sin Thou wouldst not, neither are they pleasing to Thee which are offered according to the (Old) Law. Then, said I: Behold, I come to do Thy Will, O God." According to these words, St. Paul says: "Christ taketh away the first (or ancient sacrifices) that He may establish that which followeth (that is, the Sacrifice of the Mass). By the which will, we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ" (Heb. x. 8–11).

The Mass, my beloved brethren, is the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which are really present upon our altars under the appearance of bread and wine, and are offered to God by the priest for the living and the dead.

This sublime oblation is no new sacrifice in the Catholic Church. The testimony of the holy Fathers, the sacred archives of antiquity, furnish abundant records and proofs of its existence in the Church, since the days of Christ and His Apostles. Nor, indeed, for more than fifteen hundred years, was there found one bold or bad enough to deny it, until Martin Luther, of dismal and execrable memory, raised his heretical voice against it in the sixteenth century, and thus deprived himself, and millions besides, of the many graces purchased for them by the Sacrifice of the cross, and made applicable to them by Christ through the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The latter was clearly foretold by the Prophet Malachy, when he declares to the Jews, as the mouth-piece of the Most High (1, x. 11): "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will not receive a gift of your hand. For, from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." From this passage, my dear Christians, we see that, from the period of our Lord's Crucifixion, the sacrifices of the Jews were rejected; that a *clean* oblation was instituted in their stead; and that this clean oblation was offered to His name among the Gentiles throughout the whole world, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. This, we know for a certianty, since the words of the Prophet apply with striking force and exactness to the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and not to any other sacrifice on the face of the earth; not to the sacrifices of the Jews, for God expressly declares, through Malachy, that He would not receive a gift from their hands; nor to the Sacrifice of the Cross, for that was offered up in only *one* place, and not "*in every place*." In a word, the Prophet's description does not correspond with any sacrifice but the adorable Sacrifice of our altars, which is verily "a clean oblation, offered up in every place, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same." Again, my brethren, the royal Psalmist calls Jesus Christ a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech. Now, you must understand that Melchisedech was a mysterious priest and king of the Old Law, who offered sacrifice to God, *only under the form of bread and wine.*

"If, then, perfection was by the Levitical priesthood," says St. Paul, "(for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedech, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? . . . . For he, of of whom these things are spoken, is of another tribe, of which no one attendeth at the altar. For it is evident, that our Lord sprung out of Juda, in which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And it is, yet, far more evident if, according to the similitude of Melchisedech, there ariseth another priest, who is made, not according to a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an indissoluble life; for he testifieth: Thou are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Heb. vii. 11–18). The application of this passage to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is so obvious, my brethren, that it scarcely needs a word of further comment; for, in the Mass, Christ shall invisibly be offered up in the Sacrifice *forever;* and shall, furthermore, invariably offer Himself to the Eternal Father, therein, according to the order of Melchisedech, that is, under the form of *bread* and *wine* (Ps. xix. 9). But, let us even suppose that there were no Sacrifice of *the Mass*, and that (as some non-Catholics maintain) the Psalmist referred in his remarkable prophecy exclusively to our Lord's Sacrifice upon the Cross, do you not see that Christ could not be rigidly called "*a priest forever*" upon Mount Calvary, inasmuch as the Sacrifice of the Cross was offered by Him only *once*, and *in one place?* Do you not see, also, that He could not there be declared "a priest forever, *according to the order of Melchisedech*," inasmuch as the Sacrifice of Mount Calvary was not offered according to the order of Melchisedech at all, not offered under the form of *bread and wine*, but according to the order of Aaron, that is, in a bloody manner?

In the New Testament, too, we find clear and abundant proofs of the Catholic doctrine, respecting the Sacrifice of the Mass. St. Matthew (xxvi. 26), describing the Last Supper, states that Jesus Christ "took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave it to His disciples: and said:

Take ye and eat: *this is my body.* And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this, for this is *my blood!*" Here, we see, dear brethren, that Jesus offered Himself in sacrifice; His blood was represented as separated from His body. Thus, it was mystically *shed*, though not actually shed, for the actual blood-shedding took place afterward, when He expired on the Cross. This change in the victim—namely, the body represented under one form, and the blood under another, and both thus apparently separated, one from the other, shows forth most strikingly the death of our Saviour: "the Lamb *is, as it were,* slain" (Apoc. v. 6). This same Sacramental separation, namely, the Body of Christ, under the form of bread, and the Blood, under the form of wine, may be rightly said to constitute a sacrifice, and, in reality, the Sacrifice of the Mass; or, in other words, it is the *Sacrifice of the Cross* is an *un*bloody form, together with the real infinite merits of the same, *applied* according to the intention of the person who offers it. By giving us the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus Christ has lovingly put into our hands the golden master-key by which to possess ourselves of the infinite merits which He purchased for us by the Sacrifice of the Cross, and which He has left carefully locked up therein (as in a divine treasure-house), for our use and benefit. Hence the Mass is the real application of the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Cross, as well as the *un*bloody repetition of that same sacrifice. " We, therefore, confess," says the Council of Trent, "that the Sacrifice of the Mass is, and ought to be, considered one and the same as that of the Cross, as the victim is one and the same, namely, Christ our Lord, who immolated Himself, once only, after a bloody manner, on the altar of the Cross. For the bloody and unbloody Victim are not two victims, but one only, whose *sacrifice is daily renewed* in the Eucharist, in obedience to the command of the Lord: 'Do this for a commemoration of me' (Luke xxii. 19)." [Cat. of the Council of Trent.]

In every Mass of our altars, dear brethren, the same Christ is, therefore, contained and immolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross. For the Victim is one and the same, now offering Himself by the ministry of His priests (C. of Trent). You see, then, that it was our Lord Jesus Christ who offered up the first Mass, on the eve of His bitter Passion and Death; and it is He, also, who offers up every Mass; for the priest who outwardly offers it is only the visible minister of Christ; Christ Himself, is the Invisible Priest and Victim. Wherefore, the Mass is the original, the self-same Sacrifice as that of the Cross, only differing from the latter in the manner of its oblation.

When our Divine Lord had celebrated His First Mass at His Last

Supper He gave power and command to His twelve Apostles, present with Him on that occasion, and to all their lawful successors—that is, the priests of the Catholic Church, to offer up the same sublime Sacrifice until the end of the world. "Do this," said He, "for a commemoration of me" (Luke xxii. 19). Hence it is, that in the Mass, the priests take bread and wine, and by virtue of the power of Christ, given unto them at their ordination, they change the whole substance of the bread into the Body of Christ, and the whole substance of the wine into His Blood; and no part or atom of either substance remains (Con. of Trent; Sess. xiii. 2). The species, however, of both the bread and wine remain unchanged; and this is ordained by our Lord not only to exercise our faith, but also in order to veil the dazzling splendors of His Divinity, which no mortal man can see and live. In every Mass, the priest acts in the name of Christ, and uses the words of Christ. Hence the words used at the moment of Transubstantiation, are: "This is my Body—this is my Blood." And whilst the priest thus outwardly offers the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is Christ Himself who really and invisibly offers it through His chosen minister. Jesus Christ then is (as we have already said) both Priest and Victim in this "clean oblation," foretold by the Prophet Malachy, and the same He shall continue to be in each and every Mass that is or will be offered until the end of the world.

Oh, my brethren, how shall we return due praise to God for thus deigning to become incarnate, day by day, in the hands of His priests, as He did once in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary! How grateful we ought to be for having the Mass celebrated in every land all the world over. Wherever we go, we find ourselves at home.

ON THE ENDS FOR WHICH MASS IS OFFERED.

"Do this for a commemoration of me."—LUKE xxii. 19.

THE Sacrifice of the Mass, my beloved brethren, is offered up for four great ends:

1. To give fitting, or, in other words, infinite praise and honor to Almighty God.

(*a*) The natural law, written in the heart of man, directs that every inferior should pay homage to his superior; and, futhermore, that this homage should be always in proportion to the rank and dignity of the superior. Now, this being the case, we should pay to Almighty God, as the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the universe, as our first Beginning and our last End, infinite praise, infinite honor. Anything short of the infinite would not be sufficient, nor would it be adequately worthy of His acceptance. But, since all our human offerings, all our human acts, are, like ourselves, finite, how can we offer any infinite gift to our good and merciful God?

If all the creatures of this world, no matter how rich, or beautiful, or delightful they might be in themselves, were brought to the feet of Almighty God, and laid there as an offering, they would not be worthy His acceptance; for there is nothing worthy of God's acceptance except God Himself. Jesus Christ, then, seeing this great want on the part of man, has, in a marvellous excess of divine love, supplied it by offering *Himself*, a God of infinite worth, to His Eternal Father in the Sacrifice of the Mass. In that Holy Sacrifice, dear Christians, we can give infinite praise and honor to God, by uniting ourselves to the offering made to Him on our altars by the consecrated hands of His priest. Nay, more, by every Mass that we offer, or get the priest to offer for us, by every Mass at which we assist, we can co-operate in the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ in our behalf; for, thereby discharging our first and chief duty to God, we acknowledge our total dependence on Him, and return Him fitting praise and honor. The accumulated worship of the Saints and Angels in Paradise, of the Archangels, the Seraphim, the Thrones, the Dominations, and the Powers, is unspeakingly grand and pleasing to Almighty God; but it is, as it were, nothing in comparison with the praise and honor given to Him by a single Mass celebrated by a poor, obscure priest in some hidden corner of this lower world. For the praise of all those celestial beings, great though it be, is only *finite*, whereas the praise given by a Mass is *infinite!*

(*b*) The second great end for which we offer up the Sacrifice of the Mass, is to make infinite satisfaction to God for the sins of His creatures.

Happily, my beloved brethren, we can all make sufficient satisfaction to God for our sins by this sublime Sacrifice of the altar; and by this Sacrifice alone. For, as the Sacrifice of the Cross satisfied the Divine Justice for the sins of the world, so the Sacrifice of the Mass, and it alone, satisfies for the sins of those who offer it, or cause it to be offered. And this it does, by applying to each of our needy souls the infinite merits purchased by the Sacrifice of the Cross for mankind in general. But here it must be carefully understood that the Mass does not satisfy for our mortal sins *immediately;* it does not *immediately* cancel such sins, as the Sacrament of Penance does, when properly received. It cancels them only *mediately*, that is, it gives us actual graces and helps, whereby our souls may be freed from their guilt at an early and convenient time. And thus, by the Sacrifice of the altar, dear Christians, the graces and merits, purchased by our Lord on Calvary for mankind in general, are communicated to the individual souls for whom the Mass is offered.

Who, then, can estimate the value or importance of having Masses offered for your intention, or in behalf of the sinner? Who can enumerate the benefits to be derived from frequent assistance at this adorable Sacrifice, offering it up with the intentions of the priest? Who can adequately describe the consoling clemency which God extends to us on account of the Sacrifice of the Mass! "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," says St. Leonard of Port Maurice, "is the true and sole reason of such stupendous clemency, for in it we offer to the Eternal Father the Great Victim, Jesus Christ. This is the sun of our Holy Church, which dissipates the clouds and restores serenity to the heavens. This, indeed, is the celestial rainbow that stills the tempest of the Divine Justice. For my own part, I am persuaded that, if it were not for the Holy Mass, the world would have long since tottered from its foundations, crushed beneath the enormous weight of so many accumulated iniquities. The Mass is the ponderous and powerful supporter on which the world rests—which keeps it from falling into horrid chaos. . . . . Ah, indeed, if it were not for this Holy Victim (Jesus Christ), once offered for us on the cross, and now daily offered on our altars, we, one and all, might renounce all hope of heaven, and look on hell as our final destination" (Hidden Treasure).

(*c*) We owe to God a debt of infinite gratitude for all the favors and blessings, both spiritual and temporal, which He has bestowed upon us.

We are deeply indebted to Him for all those beautiful and priceless graces which He has given us in the past, and still continues to give us in the present. We are indebted to our Lord Jesus Christ for the wondrous love He has displayed in the redemption of man; and, above all, we are indebted to Him for the institution of the sacraments, for His Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist, and for His promise to abide therein, even to the consummation of the world. What return can we make for all these favors? What offering can we make, from our poverty, worthy of this all-bountiful God? Well, brethren, we have in the Mass, and in it alone, an offering that is worthy: "an oblation and a sacrifice to God, for an odor of sweetness" (Eph. v. 2). In the Mass we offer to God His Divine Son, and that spotless Victim being a gift of infinite value, our offering of gratitude to Almighty God is thus an adequate return for all His favors.

(*d*) The fourth great end for which Mass is said, my brethren, is: to beg Almighty God for all graces and favors, both spiritual and temporal, which we require. We are all poor beggars in the sight of God. Like the Bishop of Laodicea, we are all "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Apoc. iii. 17). We need many things from God; and, owing to our multiplied and enormous sins, we require specially a mediator to make intercession for us with the Most High. And so, out of love for us (and in spite of our utter unworthiness), Jesus Christ (O strange and marvellous mercy!) has chosen to be our Mediator, and, even more, to be *Himself* our Victim of propitiation in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Whether the priest be a holy saint or an unworthy man, the intrinsic value of the Mass—because of the Invisible Priest, Jesus Christ—is necessarily infinite; although, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, the application of the Sacrifice is of greater or less efficacy in proportion to the disposition of the person for whom it is offered. Christ, in the Mass, is "able, also, to save forever them that come unto God by himself; always living to make intercession for us. For it was fitting that we should have such a High-Priest—holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 25, etc.).

What, then, dear Christians, may you not expect through the Mass when offered up for your intention? For, in every such Mass, Jesus Christ earnestly implores for you all that you desire from His Eternal Father. Jesus and the Eternal Father are *one;* therefore in the Mass, and through the Mass, you are sure to obtain all that you *rightly* ask for, and much more in addition. "Assuredly," says St. Jerome, "the Lord grants all the favors for which we petition Him in the Mass, provided they be suitable to us; and what is far more admirable, He very often grants us that for which we do not petition Him, always provided that we place no obstacles to His holy designs." St. Bernard, speaking of the intrinsic value of the Mass, says, that "more is gained by one single Mass than by distributing all your substance among the poor, or going on pilgrimages to all the most venerable sanctuaries on this globe." St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, states that "the Holy Mass contains all those fruits, all those graces, nay, all those infinite treasures which the Son of God showered so abundantly upon His Church, in the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross."

Since Almighty God has, then, vouchsafed to give us the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, He has, with it, given us the means to obtain all good things. By offering up a Mass, or by causing it to be offered for you, my brethren, it may be said that, in a certain sense, you make God your debtor. For, in that "clean oblation of the altar," you lovingly offer Jesus Christ to His Eternal Father in sacrifice; and thereby you make Almighty God an *infinite* offering, in return for the *finite* creatures He bestows upon you from His bounty, for your use and benefit. Let us, then, my brethren, in all our undertakings, make an offering of the Mass to God, and ask Him in that Holy Sacrifice for all such favors, great or small, as we may need or desire. He cannot easily refuse us, for it is the transcendent nature of God not to be outdone by us, His creatures, in kindness or in generosity. We seek for many graces at the hands of God. We stand in need of many blessings. Let us offer up the Mass to obtain them. Let us offer it up to obtain the full forgiveness of our manifold sins, both known and unknown. Let us offer up the Mass to obtain the conversion of all poor sinners. Let us offer it up to obtain protection from the many temptations of Satan. Let us offer it up, too, for all temporal things, such as good health of body and mind, and success in our lawful business. Let us offer up Masses for the sick and the dying that they may obtain the grace of a happy death. And, furthermore, let us frequently offer up the sublime Sacrifice of the Altar for all the souls suffering in Purgatory, especially for those imprisoned therein through our fault, whether friends or otherwise, that they may be speedily released from their pains, and joyfully admitted into the presence of God in heaven.

My brethren, frequently assist at the Holy Mass. Remember there is no half hour so well spent, as the half hour devoted to attendance at this Holy Sacrifice. You know, of course, that the laity assisting at Mass, offer the Sacrifice in union with the priest. Hence, the latter says at that holy time, *Orate fratres*, etc., "Pray, brethren, that *my* and *your* sacrifice may be pleasing in the sight of God the Father Omnipotent." At Mass the people should, as it were, hold up the hands of the priest when he takes the consecrated host and the chalice and offers the great Sacrifice.

Great blessings descend upon those who join with the priest in devoutly offering up this great sacrifice. No one should be stopping outside the church during time of Mass. St. Gregory says: "A well-disposed man who hears Holy Mass with due attention, is preserved in the way of rectitude, while grace and merit increase in him; and he continues to make new acquisitions of virtue which render him more and more acceptable to God." "Whoever hears Mass devoutly every day," says St. Augustine, "shall be preserved from a sudden death, which is the most awful weapon with which Divine Justice punishes the sinner." But, my brethren, listen to the sublime language of St. Leonard of Port Maurice on this subject: "Would that I could ascend," says he, "to the summit of the loftiest mountain, and cry aloud, so that the whole world might hear me exclaiming: 'Foolish, foolish people, what are ye doing? Why will you not hasten to the churches to assist at every Mass celebrated therein? Why will you not imitate those holy Angels who, according to St. John Chrysostom, descend in thousands from the heavens, when Mass is being celebrated, and array themselves before our altars, covered with wings of holy awe, tarrying there during the august sacrifice, in order to intercede more efficaciously for us, knowing well that this is the most opportune time and most propitious occasion that can be, for obtaining favors from heaven?'" (Hid. Treasure). And St. Leonard, furthermore, adds the following very emphatic words—(they are the burning words of a saint): —"Let me, on bended knees," he says, "and with hands uplifted, implore all who read this little work on the Sacrifice of the Mass not to close it till they have made a firm resolution of henceforth employing all possible diligence in assisting at Mass, and causing to be celebrated as many Masses as their means will permit, not only for the souls of the deceased, but, also, for their own souls!" (*Ibid.**)

Oh! my brethren, let us thank Almighty God a thousand times for His unspeakable love toward us in having given to us in the Church the rich treasure of the Mass! Let us ask Mary, the Crowned Queen of Heaven, to thank our Blessed Lord and God, again and again, for His love for us, individually, in thus, also, having made known to us the hidden riches of this adorable Sacrifice, and the untold benefits we may derive from it, both for time and for eternity! It is a precious mine of exhaustless wealth, a treasury of grace, a perennial fountain of blessings; it is the sun and centre of the whole system of true religion; it is the heavenly focus—inexpressibly loved and lovely—in which are concentrated all the soul-saving rays of God's beauty and royal splendor, of His glory and Majesty and Divinity. The Mass is the miracle of miracles—it is the mystery of God's deep, boundless, and burning love for man!—"Having loved His own, who were in the world," says St. John the Evangelist, "He loved them to the end" (John xiii. 1). Amen.

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* By a special rule of this Order, St. Leonard was not allowed to accept any money for "saying" Mass.

If the whole globe were of solid gold, it would not be a sufficient price for a Mass.

ON CONTRITION.

"A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."—Ps. l. 19.

THE heart, my brethren, is the seat of the affections: love and courage and vigor come forth from it as from their source. Virtues, and vices also, of every kind spring from the heart. The virtues that adorn a good life have their origin in the heart. Hence, we say of a good man, he has a good heart. And of a bad man, on the contrary, we say, he has a bad heart. "The things which proceed out of the mouth," says our Blessed Lord, "come forth from the heart. . . . . For, from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies" (Matt. xv. 18, 19).

When you see a man, or woman, whose profession, as a Christian, is, or at least ought to be, holy poverty, and yet is bent on making money, grasping at property, hunting after rich people, you know that there is avarice in that man or woman's heart. When you see a hypocrite trying to pass for a saint; when you see any one stooping to low tricks; wishing others to do everything above-board, so as to take unjust advantage thereby, whilst himself does everything under-board; trying to thwart his neighbor, and throw ridicule upon him: you know that such a man has a mean heart. Whenever, again, you see a man or a woman going about gossipping, or whispering among the people; wanting to know everybody's business, whilst neglecting his own; saying: "This one is selfish and ignorant and unfit to fill the position he is in"; when you observe some elderly, and perhaps single (?) persons, of either sex, given to an indulgence in sloth, or to intoxicating drink, or to ambition, or impurity, or any other vice: you know at once that such a person must certainly have a bad heart. The various powers of body and faculties of mind that are put to work in the doing of evil, are only the instruments in the service of the heart. They have no liberty of their own: the heart is their ruler and governor; and they have to obey whether they like it or not. From the heart, then, all proceeds.

When sin, therefore, is committed, the heart, my brethren, is the first and chief, and in fact the only criminal. And, consequently, when the sinner is penitent, and becomes sorry for his sin, it is his *heart* that should really feel the sorrow.

Now, my brethren, when we have true sorrow for sin the heart is, as it were, crushed and broken. Such sorrow is called by the expressive name of "contrition," which word is a compound of two Latin words signifying: a complete crushing together, or a breaking to pieces. The heart is hardened by pride and sin; by contrition it is smashed up into atoms. The sorrow of heart includes, of course, a sorrow of mind, arising from the painful knowledge of the nature of sin and the unspeakable hatred which God bears to it.

The Catechism defines contrition to be: "A hearty sorrow and detestation of sin for having offended God, with a firm resolution of sinning no more." As the malice of sin proceeds from the heart, so the repentance, sorrow, and detestation of sin must likewise proceed from the same source. The sorrow, then, must be a "hearty sorrow": no less will do. God Himself has given a strict precept to this effect. "The Lord hath uttered His voice before the face of His army: for His armies are exceeding great, for they are strong and execute His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can stand it? Now, therefore, saith the Lord: Be converted to me with *all your heart* in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your *hearts*, and not your garments" (Joel xi. 12, 13).

The penitents of the Old Law used to express their sorrow for sin by changing their garments. Our Lord alludes to this custom, when upbraiding the two cities, wherein were done the most of His miracles, for that they had not done penance for their sins: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21).

Contrition is a necessary part of the Sacrament of Penance: the other parts are: confession, satisfaction, and not the absolution given by the priest. Of course, it is not necessary here to state that it is only the sins committed after baptism which are forgiven by the Sacrament of Penance.

Contrition is essentially necessary, as a means to obtain the pardon of sin. For, whilst the sinner is in a state of mortal sin, his back is, as it were, turned upon God; but when he is in a state of grace his face is joyfully turned toward God. Now, this change, namely, the sorrow of heart, and detestation of sin, is necessary; as, otherwise, the sinner would be and would not be, at the same time, turned toward God. If there were no contrition, no change of heart required, the sinner could be, at the same time, both the friend and the enemy of God; which is supremely absurd. Whilst the sinner is in mortal sin, he is an enemy of God, and he cannot possibly be the friend of God, unless he changes from that state. It is by contrition the sinner changes from the one state to the other.

Again, contrition is necessary as a means of salvation for those who have fallen into mortal sin. Christ Himself has given a strict precept to this effect: "But except you do penance," He says, "you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 5). "Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, *that* your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 9). The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "To it (penance) in so special a manner belongs the efficacy of cancelling sins, that without penance we cannot by any means obtain or even hope for remission of sins" (Part II., chap. v.). A Christian in mortal sin may be saved without confession or absolution, but he cannot be saved without contrition.

Venial sins also require some kind of penance in order to be remitted. The Church performs daily penance toward their remission. St. Augustine says: "If venial sins could be remitted without penance, the daily penance performed for them by the Church would be to no purpose." Of course, there can be no penance without contrition.

Contrition is of two kinds: perfect and imperfect. Perfect contrition is a hatred for sin, because sin is offensive to God, who is infinitely good and perfect in Himself. Imperfect contrition, or attrition as it is called, is a hatred for sin arising from the fear of the punishment due to sin in the next life, or from any other supernatural motive. In perfect contrition there is a love of God for His sake alone!—in imperfect contrition a love for God for our own sake. Where contrition is, the whole heart is crushed; there is a perfect love of God, and a complete sorrow for sin. Where attrition is, only the surface, as it were, of the heart is touched: the love is imperfect, and the sorrow incomplete.

In attrition there is a mere beginning of love for God. This beginning is perfected into full love, or charity, by receiving the Sacrament of Penance. Attrition with confession and absolution secures to the sinner a state of grace. St. Alphonsus Liguori, a Doctor of the Universal Church, says: "Whenever a penitent has an act of sorrow, he has also, even explicitly, acts of Faith and Hope (not, indeed, by direct reflection upon them, but by actually exercising them): because, without doubt, he does then actually believe and hope, that, in virtue of the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven him by the Sacrament of Penance. And we say that a *beginning of love* is found in any attrition—both in the fear of punishments to be inflicted by God, according to that of Ecclesiasticus xxv. 16: 'the fear of God is the beginning of His love'; and also in the hope of pardon and eternal happiness, according to these words of St.

Thomas: 'From this, that we hope to obtain good things from any one, we begin to love him'" (St. Lig., Hom. Apostol.).

Sins are immediately remitted by perfect contrition. This is the only means we have for recovering God's friendship when we fall into mortal sin, and cannot go to confession, or are unable to make a confession. Perfect contrition includes the intention of going to confession. Yet before the reception of the sacrament the sins are forgiven, just as the lepers of old had been cured even before they had reached the priests (Luke xvii. 14). Attrition will not remit sin unless in the Sacrament of Penance.

A question is raised as to how long a person in mortal sin can remain without committing a fresh mortal sin in not making an act of contrition: either imperfect contrition, with the sacrament, or perfect contrition with or without the sacrament. There are various opinions given by theologians. The more probable opinion, however, held by St. Liguori and others, is, that for well-instructed Catholics to defer it longer than a month would be a mortal sin. It would be a mortal sin, also, not to do so whenever we are conscious of being in mortal sin, and are in probable danger of death; or whenever we are about to receive any sacrament which requires to be received in a state of grace. The same, also, if we are about to administer any sacrament. Sometimes the laity have to administer private baptism.

There are certain qualities, my brethren, which true contrition must have. 1°. It must be universal. It must extend to all our mortal sins, not even one excepted. If there should happen to be even one mortal sin for which we have no sorrow, either implicit or explicit, that one mortal sin would be an insuperable obstacle to the infusion of grace into the soul; and without the infusion of grace no mortal sin can ever be forgiven. We cannot be in a state of mortal sin and in a state of grace at the same time. We must have true sorrow for *all* our sins. "Be converted and do penance for *all* your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ezech. xviii. 30). "You shall seek me, and you shall find me; when you shall seek me with *all* your heart. And I will be found by you, saith the Lord: and I will bring back your captivity, and I will gather you out of all nations, and from all the places to which I have driven you out" (Jer. xxix. 13, 14).

To have our sorrow universal we must have a firm purpose of avoiding all sin for the time to come. And we must, furthermore, repair the injury done to God by our sin; and if we have injured our neighbor in any way, we must repair the injury as soon as we can, and as far as we possibly can. "The sin is not forgiven, unless what was taken away be restored," says St. Augustine (Epist. v. 4). God will not forgive us if we do not forgive all others, without any exception. He has emphatically told us so. "But," says He, "if you will not forgive men" (that is, all men without exception), "neither will your Father forgive you your offenses" (Matt. vi. 15).

2°. Our contrition, whether perfect or imperfect, must be *supernatural:* that is, our sorrow for sin must arise from supernatural motives—motives known to us by faith—such as the love of God, or the fear of hell, etc. To be sorry for sin because by it we have brought disgrace upon ourselves, or disease, or temporal loss, is not sufficient. Such sorrow is based on natural motives: it is a sorrow of this world. King Antiochus was sorry for his sins, because of the bodily pains he felt as arising from his sins; but his sorrow was of no avail. It was not founded on any motive known by faith: it was only natural sorrow, not supernatural.

3°. Our contrition must be sovereign: that is, our sorrow for sin must be far beyond the sorrow that we would have for anything in this world. Sin is the greatest evil. God's grace and friendship are far greater in value than anything in this world; therefore, our sorrow at losing them by sin should be greater far than our sorrow at losing anything else.

4°. Our contrition must contain a firm resolution of sinning no more. Hence, we must be prepared to avoid the occasions of sin. Every person, place, or object that we have reason to know would be an occasion or cause to us of committing sin, must be carefully avoided. No matter how dear they may be to us; no matter how hard we may find it to avoid them, avoid them we must, or else our contrition is no contrition. It is only a mockery, a delusion, and a snare of the devil. A priest is not at liberty to give absolution to any one who is not prepared to avoid the immediate occasions of sin.

The man that has a firm, real resolution of sinning no more does not easily relapse into sin. Where there is true contrition God gives His grace; and the grace of God does solid, substantial work, which is not likely to be blown down with every slight wind of temptation. Where there is true contrition the penitent yields, not without great efforts and struggle, and not until after he has fought a long and brave fight with the enemy. The relapsing sinner, on the contrary, shows that he has only a half purpose; not a firm full purpose. His will is half for God, and half for the devil. He is a double-minded man; and "a double-minded man is inconstant in all his ways" (James i. 8). The best sign for knowing whether the contrition was good or bad is, the amendment of life, or the relapse of the sinner. "By their fruits you shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20).

Ah! my brethren, judging ourselves by this test, I fear that when we received the Sacrament of Penance we often had only false and bad contrition for our sins. "Be not without fear for sins forgiven" (Eccli. v. 5): that is, sins supposed to be forgiven.

To go to confession without having true contrition is to place yourselves at once in the hands of the devil to be led by him into hell. St. Chrysostom says: "The devil leads some by sin, others by penance into damnation." So cautious of profaning the Sacrament of Penance were the early Fathers of the Church, that they refused to give absolution to relapsing sinners sooner than at the time of death. St. Isidore speaks strongly on this subject. He says: "He is a scoffer, not a penitent, who commits what he repented of. Nor is he cleansed who weeps for his sins, yet does not forsake them, but reiterates after penance what he wept for." By contrition the sinner takes his soul away from the devil; but by relapse he makes atonement, as it were, to the devil.

You see, my brethren, how necessary it is for us to have true contrition for our sins. What if we thought our contrition sufficient, when in reality it was defective? Then, indeed, great would be the mistake. The Sacrament of Penance received unworthily, would be to us a source of ruin and damnation! Penance is a plank after shipwreck; and, as in time of shipwreck few save themselves by a plank, so it is only a few that save themselves by the plank of penance. True penitents, it is to be feared, are very rare. The time of St. Ambrose was remarkable for its illustrious penitents, and yet the Saint goes so far as to say: "I have more easily found him who shall have preserved his innocence unspotted, than he who, after a fall, shall have done worthy penance."

Let us, therefore, my brethren, pray for the great grace of true contrition. Contrition, whether perfect or imperfect, is a gift which we cannot have unless it be given us by God. The Prophet Jeremias cries out: "Convert me, and I shall be converted: for Thou art the Lord my God. For after Thou didst convert me, I did penance" (Jer. xxxi. 18, 19). "Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in me" (Osee iii. 9). "No man can come to me," says our Lord, "except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him" (John vi. 44). God draws us to Himself by His grace. When grace touches the will, the will forthwith springs into a love for God, and a hearty sorrow for past sin; and a firm resolution not to sin ever again is the outcome. God gave the grace of contrition to Peter, who "wept bitterly" for his sins; He gave it to King David, who watered his couch with his tears; and He gave it to Mary Magdalen, who with contrition, fell down before her Saviour, and washed His sacred feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair! "And Jesus said to her: Go in peace, and sin no more!" These words echoed in her ears: she sinned no more. She is now a saint in heaven, and the words of the Saviour to her still echo in her ears. Sweeter they grow, and sweeter, as some of the high-toned enrapturing chords of celestial music! Go in peace, and sin no more! Her peace to-day is the blaze of heaven's glory around her!

Ah! my brethren, the grace of true contrition is always ready in God's hands to be given to you. All God wants is that you ask it of Him. "Ask" it, He says, "and it shall be given to you" (Luke xi. 9).

It is natural to fall into sin: it is a disgrace to remain in sin: it is an honor to co-operate with God's grace, to do penance, and thus to get free of sin.

Where there is true contrition, there is a complete change of life: the "old man" is exchanged for the "new." The sinful pleasures, once loved, are now hated; the dangerous occasions of sin are avoided; the soul is filled with hope in the merciful forgiveness of God, and filled also with a desire to keep His commandments for the time to come.

My brethren, let us exhort you in the burning words of St. Paul: "But now lay you also away, anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech out of your mouth. Lie not one to another: stripping yourself of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him who created him" (Coloss. iii. 8, 9, etc.). Oh! would that every word in this book had a tongue to urge the importance and the necessity of contrition; for "a contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psalm l. 19).

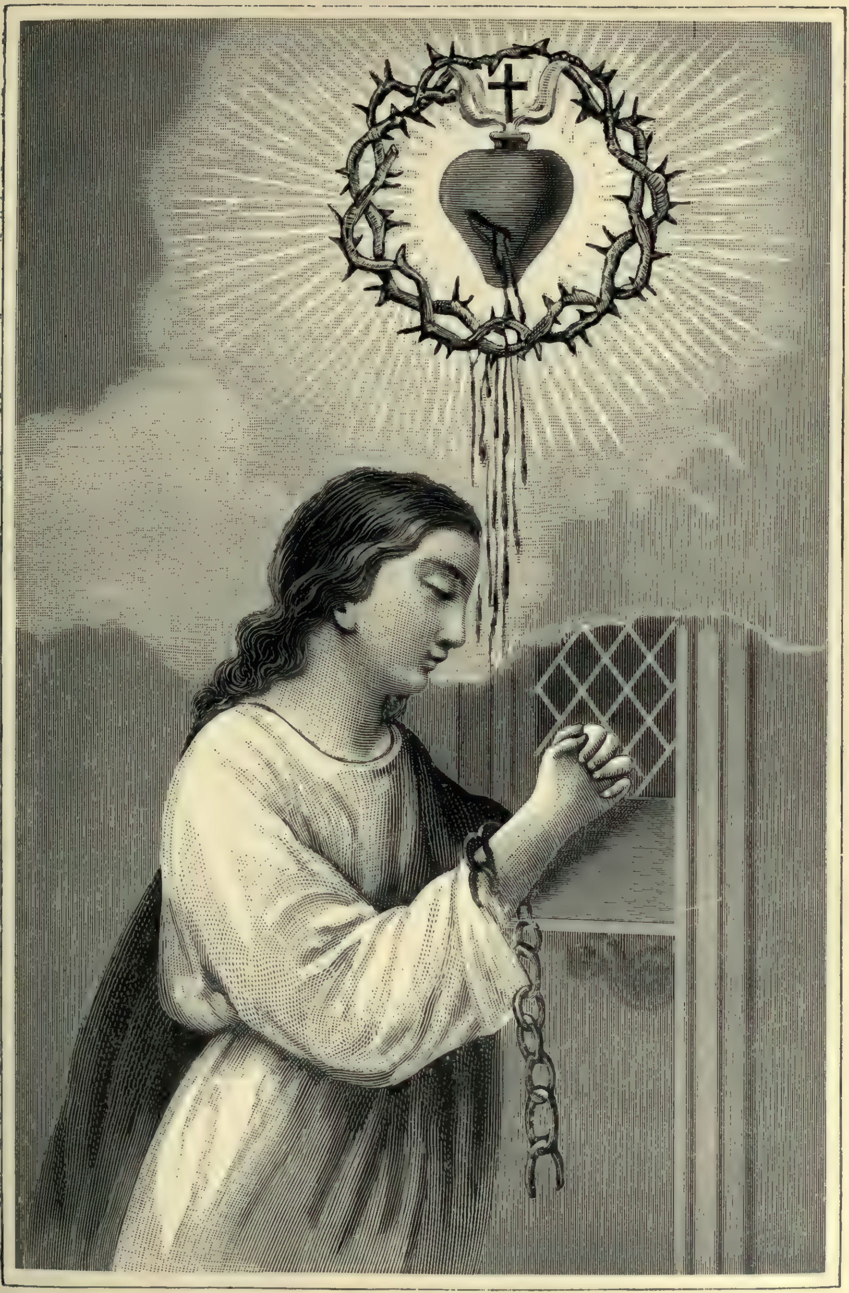
ON CONFESSION.

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—JOHN xx. 22, 23.

ST. JOHN tells us that on the first day of the week, when it was late, and the disciples were gathered together, and the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus stood in the midst of His disciples, and said to them: "Peace be to you." And then breathing upon them, He said: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. . . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John xx.).

From these clear and simple words, it is evident that that self-same power which Jesus Christ Himself had over sin, as to its forgiveness, He communicated to His Apostles. And He desired that from that time forward sins should be forgiven by the Apostles and their lawful successors. Hence, not to have their sins forgiven by this means, whenever it was possible, would be to make null and void the words of Christ. If the confession of our sins to God alone were sufficient for forgiveness, or if there were any other means besides forgiveness through the priests, what use would it be for Christ to say to His Apostles or Priests: "Whose sins *you* shall *retain*, they are retained"? It is only where the forgiveness of the priest cannot be had, that Christ Himself forgives. Christ, of course, can and does then exercise this power personally and immediately, just as by His omnipotence He has communicated the power to others: "*Receive ye* the Holy Ghost." By the power of the *Holy Ghost*, so received, the Apostles can forgive sin.

Now, the exercise of the power of forgiving sin implies the necessity of confession. For, how can a priest forgive sin if he does not know what the sin is? And, how can he know what the sin is unless the sinner tells it to him? And this telling of sin to a priest with a view to get it forgiven, is nothing more or less than confession. Therefore, confession is necessary in order to get sins forgiven. Christ meant confession, and will not dispense with it unless, indeed, the sinner be unable, through some cause or other, to make a confession of his sin to a priest.



Confession.

When exercising the power of forgiving sin the priest acts as a judge of consciences; but the priest cannot act as a judge of consciences, unless he knows them; therefore, confession is necessary in order to exercise the commission given by Christ. Without confession the priest cannot judge when exactly to "retain," and when to "forgive." St. Liguori says that "For those who sin grievously there is no means of salvation but the confession of their sins." Confession cannot be made, and absolution given, by messenger or by letter. Clement VIII., in the year 1602, condemned this method.

Since the institution of the Sacrament of Penance, confession, when available, is as necessary for the remission of mortal sin committed after baptism as baptism itself is necessary for the remission of original sin. Prayers, fastings, alms-deeds, no matter how good in themselves, cannot serve as a substitute for confession. We cannot ever get mortal sins forgiven by them, nor by any other means, unless we have recourse by confession, when it is possible, to those to whom Christ gave the power of forgiving sins.

Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on Calvary, in order to wash out the sins of the world. But, though He thus shed His blood, still He arranged that this blood, so shed, should be *applied* by the priest to the soul of each individual and applied by means of the Sacrament of Penance, as when the sinner makes his confession. It was after the shedding on Calvary (*not before* it) that Christ instituted confession, and this is an irresistible argument to prove that Christ meant that confession was necessary, in order to apply His precious blood and thereby to get sins forgiven. The best medicine in the apothecary's shop will not cure unless it be *applied.* If Christ's Blood, *as shed on Calvary,* were alone sufficient to forgive sin, should not Christ Himself know it; and, knowing it, how could He, who was Truth itself, utter the lie when giving the commission to His Apostles: "Whose sins *you* retain, they *are retained!*"

The Church has, at all times, preached and practiced the doctrine of confession. St. Clement, a disciple of St. Peter, taught, in the first century, the necessity of confession, in order to get the forgiveness of sins. Here are his words: "St. Peter taught that we must reveal, even the bad thoughts, to the priests."

Tertullian taught the necessity of confession in the second century. He said: "Several fail to tell their sins, because they are more concerned about their honor than about their salvation. . . . . What is better, to conceal your sins and be damned, or to make them known and be saved?"

Origen, in the third century, taught: "If we are sorry for our sins, and, if we confess them not only to God, but also to those who have a remedy for them, *then* they shall be forgiven us."

St. Ambrose, in the fourth century, writes: "But, they say, we show reverence to the Lord by reserving to Him alone the power of forgiving sins."

Now, no one can more grievously offend Him than they who would annul His commands and throw upon *Him* the duty given to themselves. For, since the Lord Jesus Himself has said in His Gospel: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained"; who is it who honors Him the more, he that obeys His commands, or he that resists them?

From these, and from countless other proofs, we clearly see that confession is no new doctrine in the Catholic Church. Nor, indeed, would it be easy for any man to introduce such a doctrine, repugnant as it is to the feelings of human nature, without having some general reclamation, or outcry, raised against it. History records no such introduction or reclamation, and this, in itself, is a proof that confession is from the days of Christ and His Apostles.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "Nor let any one suppose that confession was, indeed, instituted by our Lord, but yet so as not to impose *a necessity for its use;* for the faithful are to hold, that he who is weighed down by mortal guilt, must be recalled to spiritual life by the Sacrament of Confession. . . . . Mortal sins, as we have already said, although even buried in the darkest secrecy, and such as are forbidden only by the two last commandments, *are, all and each, to be enumerated*" (Part II., ch. v.).

A confession must have certain qualities, in order to have effect in remitting sin. It must be, 1°, *humble.* In confession you should accuse yourself as a criminal, conscious of his guilt. You should not be throwing the blame upon others, or saying, as Adam and Eve, that it was this one's fault or that one's fault.

All men fall into sin. Sin is the common malady of all. It is the natural and legitimate consequence of the infirmity of human nature. God has annexed shame to sin, so that it may be a barrier to it; but the devil manages to invert this order of things, for he takes away the shame when the sinner is about to commit sin. and gives it back when the sinner is about to confess it.

2°. Our confession must be *entire,* that is, after having examined our consciences carefully, we must tell, in confession, all the mortal sins that we recollect and which have not been remitted in a good confession. We should give their name, and number, and the circumstances which increase or lessen the guilt. In giving the number of mortal sins, care must be taken to give the exact number, if possible; and, if you cannot know the exact number, then give a guess at the number. Never use such vague and unintelligible words as, "I committed such a sin '*an odd time*'; '*very often*'; '*a good many times*'; '*not often*,' etc. Also, if you have taken another's property, tell the amount, and whether you have yet restored it. If you have injured your neighbor's character or person, tell to what extent, and whether you have restored the injury or not. A confessor cannot relieve you from the obligation you are under of restoring your neighbor's property or character as soon as you can and as far as possible. "The sin is not forgiven," says St. Augustine, "unless what was taken away be restored." Nor can the confessor relieve you from the obligation of telling your sins. Whether the confessor asks you or not, you are bound to tell every mortal sin. If you wilfully conceal a mortal sin in confession, the confession is bad; no sin is forgiven; but, on the contrary, the sinner becomes more guilty by adding to his former guilt the horrid crime of sacrilege. Such confession is bad and sacrilegious and has to be made all over again.

But, in case you forget telling a mortal sin after having made a due examination of conscience, then the sins, including the forgotten one, are forgiven; and the sinner has only to tell it whenever he may remember it afterward at confession. In this case the good God will take the will for the deed.

3°. Our confession must be *sincere:* we must confess our sins just as they really are, without adding anything to them, or subtracting anything from them. What is doubtful should be told as *doubtful;* what is certain, told as *certain;* what is grievous, told as *grievous.* Sincerity is a beautiful quality in any person: it is specially beautiful in a penitent at confession. St. Gregory says: "If you excuse yourself, God will accuse you; if you accuse yourself, God will excuse you."

4°. Our confession must be *simple.* By this is meant that we must confine ourselves at confession exclusively to our *sins;* no irrelevant matter must be brought in by the penitent, no more than by the confessor. The names of persons who may be implicated in our sins, or who may have given us scandal, must, on no account, be mentioned. Charity strictly requires this. In confession we should have nothing to say about any person but ourselves, unless, indeed, it be absolutely necessary for the due declaration of our sins; nor must we mention, or even suggest, the name of a person of whom we have formed a rash judgment. And the confessor is bound at once to check the penitent if he finds him about to make any such disclosure. To have the confession *simple*, the penitent must confess his own sins, the whole of his own sins, and nothing but his *own sins.* Behold, my brethren, the sacred secrecy to be observed in the tribunal of confession! Behold how jealous the Church is to have nothing said or done that would make the Sacrament of Penance odious to society! What slaughter of souls is perpetrated by any *false* zeal, whereby this sacrament is made use of to correct the absent! Alas! that the instrument of life should ever be converted into an instrument of death! That you may know the truth, let us here state that the confessional cannot be made use of as a means of obtaining knowledge. And should knowledge of the sin or scandal of others be obtained through it, directly, or even indirectly, it cannot be made use of, though it were to save the life of a man, or to save the souls of the whole human race. Hence, a priest can make no use of knowledge received directly, or even indirectly, from confession, in excluding unworthy persons from Holy Orders, or from the reception of any other sacrament, or from offices in Church or State. Otherwise, of course, the Sacrament of Penance would suffer by becoming odious. It would be used as an unamiable spy. What the priest, therefore, knows by confession, he knows less than what he does not know at all. He must act as if he had no knowledge of it. Nor if put on his oath can he divulge: his knowledge is not communicable. The seal of confession requires that he bear to be cut into atoms, or suffer martyrdom, as St. John Nepomucen did, rather than divulge one tittle heard in confession. Even our enemies cannot prove that the seal of confession has been ever violated: God has specially guarded this divine seal. "Let the priest take the greatest care, neither by word or sign, nor by any other means whatever, in *the least degree* to betray the sinner"; such is the warning of the Council of Lateran.

Again, thanks to God, the Church allows liberty of conscience to even the least of her children. To prevent possible sacrilege she desires that every one should have liberty in choosing a confessor. And whilst the penitent has this liberty, the confessor, on the other hand, cannot, without committing sin, ask any penitent to go to confession to *himself* rather than to any other. This is but right. God wishes sinners to be brought to heaven; and no priest can tell whether it is himself, or not, that God has intended to be the guide. What, if one priest were appointed by God for the purpose, and the devil succeeded in getting the guidance of the soul taken out of that priest's hands! Alas! what a victory then for the devil! Oh! the goodness and mercy of God in guarding the Sacrament of Penance from the dangers of this kind, which continually hang over it. Would that we could join from this moment with the saints in heaven, in singing for eternity the praises thus due to God!

The third commandment of the Church obliges all who have come to the use of reason to go to confession at least once a year. Monthly confession is recommended very strongly to all. St. Francis de Sales went to confession every day. He was anxious that his soul should be always shining with the lustre and beauty of grace. What care we take to have our faces and hands washed frequently: but the hands and the face are nothing in comparison with the soul. There is no beauty on earth to compare with the nameless beauty of the grace of God, as it shines out through the face of a truly pious man or woman. The hypocrite's face sadly lacks this beauty: he has the brass, but not the gold. By mortal sin, all the merits and good works of our life become dead: by a good confession they at once revive.

The advantages arising from confession are many and great. By confession, sin is forgiven and grace restored; good works, dead through sin, revive. Pride is the root of all sin and evil; confession is a work of humiliation; therefore, it strikes at the root of all sin. Confession is a check to vice; it is a support to virtue; it protects society. How many jealousies and quarrels are prevented or cured by confession? How many injustices or scandals are prevented by it? Restitution of money and property and character are the happy results of confession. The would-be Reformers, themselves, acknowledge the advantages arising from confession. Luther says: "The world grows worse and worse, and becomes more wicked every day. Men are now more given to revenge, more avaricious, more devoid of mercy, less modest and more incorrigible; in fine, more wicked than in the Papacy." Bucer says: "The greater part of the people seem to have embraced the (Protestant) Gospel, only to live at their pleasure and to enjoy their lusts and lawless appetites without control." Speaking of confession, the Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "The great care and assiduity which pastors should devote to its exposition will be easily understood if we reflect that, in the general opinion of the pious, to *Confession* is, in a great measure, to be ascribed whatever of holiness, piety, and religion has been preserved in the Church in our times, through the boundless beneficence of God; so that to no one ought it be matter of surprise that the enemy of the human race, in his efforts to overthrow to its foundation the Catholic Faith, should, through the agency of the ministers and satellites of his impiety, have endeavored to assail with all his might this citadel, as it were, of Christian virtue."

Let us then, my brethren, make good use of confession. Let us not be kept from it by sloth, nor by fear, nor by false shame. It is an awful thing to go to sleep at night in a state of mortal sin. What if you awake to find yourself surrounded by the seething flames of hell! If there were a coal of fire upon your foot, would you be too lazy to throw it off? If you were drowning, and a saving plank were extended to you, would you step upon it? It is easier to confess to one individual, tied up by all the laws of secrecy, human and divine, than to have to confess before the whole world hereafter.

Why should you be ashamed to confess your sins? Why not take the shame off yourself and put it upon Satan? When the devil is tempting the sinner to fall, he takes away the shame from him; but when he is going to make a confession, the devil hastily gives back the shame. Let no one be ashamed, then. The power of forgiving sin has not been given by God to an angel, or to a saint, but to man, frail human creature, tempted and subject to fall like every one else; and, therefore, disposed to feel compassion for the sinner, and to be full of mercy. St. Peter, the chief and head of the priesthood, was permitted to fall into terrible sin, in order to teach a lesson to all. St. Augustine cries out: "He who hears your sins is a sinner like you, and perhaps a greater. . . . . Why, then, do you fear, O sinner! to confess to man and a sinner? Ah, my brethren, why should we be so foolish as to die in shame and pain, rather than discover some hidden wound to a loving physician, who is able to cure us?"

Though your sins were as numerous as the countless blades of grass that are in the world, and though they were as shameful and enormous as that nothing could be considered greater, yet God, in His Sacrament of Penance, forgives them all! In this sacrament the meekness, and patience, and benignity, and winning love of Jesus, all meet as in their centre. Here His Precious Blood works silently, invisibly, with a heavenly pathos around it, fitting the soul for Heaven, and imparting to it the fragrance which is experienced by the blessed in the society of Jesus in Paradise.

Judging by the way that Jesus acts, it would appear that He cannot help being sweet, and tender, and touching, and beautiful beyond all comparison in His dealings with the penitent sinner. Even as we write, how the angels with their silver trumpets sound forth in heaven the mercies of God displayed in the Sacrament of Penance!

If there were only one man in the whole world who had the power given him to forgive sin, should we not praise God for that favor, even though the poor, and the sick, and the feeble were unable to go to the spot where that one man lived, to get their sins forgiven? God has multiplied His favors. He has multiplied His priests: all can have access to them. The unsetting sun of the Sacrament of Penance shines upon one and it shines upon all at the same time: praise forever to God.

In the Sacrament of Penance Jesus remains as a Physician, inviting all who are laboring against temptations and heavily laden with sin to come and He will refresh and heal them. In this sacrament Jesus is the Father running with joy in His eyes to meet His prodigal son whom He sees returning. In this sacrament Jesus gives again the same sweet look of forgiveness which He gave once before to Mary Magdalene the sinner.

In this sacrament Jesus is the Good Shepherd climbing the hills in search of the lost sheep, and, finding it, claps His hands and leaps for joy, and placing it fondly upon His shoulders returns home to the Fold rejoicing. Behold I have found my sheep that was lost. Wherever there is a confession made, there is Jesus present, silently and invisibly, saying to the confessor: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John xx. 22).

ON INDULGENCES.

> "Thou art Peter. . . . . And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."—MATT. xvi. 18, etc.

IN sin, my brethren, there are two things to be clearly distinguished: first, the *guilt* or injury which is done to God by sin; and, secondly, the *punishment* due to the sinner on account of that guilt. The guilt of mortal sin, and the eternal punishment due to it, is, as you know, remitted by the Sacrament of Penance, and even by an act of perfect contrition whenever there is not an opportunity of receiving the sacrament. But, it does not follow that the *temporal* punishment is always remitted with the remission of the eternal punishment. For, although David was assured by the Prophet Nathan that the Lord had taken away his sin, and that he should not die, still, as a temporal punishment, God punished him with the death of the child of his adultery, and with the rebellion, and death also, of his dearly-beloved son, Absalom, and with many other punishments and calamities (2 Kings xii.). There are several instances of the same up and down through the Scriptures. St. Augustine, in his commentary on Psalm l., says: "Thou, O Lord, dost not leave unpunished the sins of even those to whom Thou grantest pardon"; that is, pardon of the *eternal* punishment.

Now, God sends this temporal punishment in a thousand different ways; and you will ask: How is it to be averted from us, and cancelled? We can cancel it, my brethren, (*a*) by performing the penance which the priest enjoins upon us when he gives us absolution. This reparation of the injury done to God by sin, is called satisfaction. Satisfaction is sacramental or voluntary. Sacramental satisfaction is a part of the Sacrament of Penance. It consists in performing the prayers, or fasts, or other good works which the priest enjoins upon the penitent who receives absolution. This penance, so enjoined, should be in proportion to the enormity of the sins. St. Thomas says: "If the priest impose a less penance than the sins deserve, the penitent is obliged to do more; and if he neglect to do it in this life, he must suffer it in Purgatory."

When the priest gives absolution he adds: "Whatever good you shall do, or whatever evil you shall suffer, let it be toward the remission of" (the temporal punishment due to) "your sins." The pious endeavors of a penitent constitute the voluntary satisfaction. These will supply whatever may be wanting in the penances imposed by the confessor toward the satisfaction for our sins.

Temporal punishment can be cancelled, (*b*) by prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds, as St. Thomas says. And under this head are included: pious reading, meditation, retreats, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, hearing Holy Mass; bearing patiently the sorrows sent us by God; mortifications of body and spirit voluntarily undertaken by ourselves, abstaining from intoxicating drinks or dainty food, etc.; by feeding the hungry, harboring the harborless, visiting those who are sick, or sore, or in prison, burying the dead, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, protecting those wrongfully accused and persecuted, comforting the afflicted, instructing the ignorant, correcting sinners, forgiving injuries, etc. (*c*) We can cancel the temporal punishment by gaining indulgences.

An indulgence is a remission of the whole or part of the temporal punishment due to sin. Indulgences are of two kinds: plenary and partial.

A *plenary* indulgence remits the whole of the temporal punishment due to sin. A person dying immediately after having received a plenary indulgence, would go at once straight to heaven. A jubilee is a form of plenary indulgence which is granted every twenty-five years, and also on some other occasions, to all the faithful who shall comply with the conditions laid down by the Pope who grants the jubilee. At such times all confessors have extended faculties; they can absolve from almost all reserved cases, and commute vows.

A *partial* indulgence, as the name implies, is a remission of such part of the temporal punishment as would have been remitted in the early ages of the Church by the canonical penances then undergone by the sinner for a certain specified length of time. For instance, an indulgence of 100 days is a partial indulgence. And it means that when it is obtained, there is as much of the temporal punishment cancelled, or atoned for, as would formerly have been by a canonical penance enjoined by the Church for 100 days. In like manner, an indulgence of seven quarantines means that, as much temporal punishment is atoned for as would be by the austerities of seven Lents (forty days each), in the early ages of the Church. In the beginning, all canonical penances were imposed for "*years* and *days*," not for "weeks or months."

The canonical penances imposed then were very severe. For instance, any person who had talked or laughed in church, during divine service, had to fast for ten days on bread and water. Any person who had cursed his parents, had to fast for forty days. The canonical penance for the sin of fornication was three years, and for the sin of adultery, five, and sometimes seven years. And during these years the penitent was not allowed to receive the Blessed Eucharist, and had, moreover, to stand at the church door on Sundays and holydays dressed in a penitential habit, and asking the prayers of the faithful as they passed in and out. Is the Divine Justice changed since that time? Or is it more easily satisfied now than then? God is unchangeable!

But how much exactly, or how little, of the temporal punishment, whether here or in Purgatory, is atoned for by a partial indulgence, God alone knows. No man has any knowledge of it whatsoever. It is a mystery locked up in the mind of God.

A partial indulgence granted by any of the Popes, scarcely ever exceeds twenty years. The Raccolta and Maurel "On Indulgences," give a long list of indulgences which can be easily gained. Amongst them, we find that Benedict XIV. granted, 1756, an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines every time a person assisted at a sermon preached in the church on Sundays or holydays; Gregory XVI. granted an indulgence of 300 days to any one who circulated a good book; Benedict XIII. granted an indulgence to every one who says the Angelus; and there is an indulgence of 300 days for saying the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the Stations of the Cross are enriched with all the same indulgences as may be gained by visiting in person the sacred places in Jerusalem.

The Catholic Church has received from her Divine Founder the power of granting indulgences. She can remit the temporal punishment of sin as well as the sin itself. And Jesus coming spoke to His disciples saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18); "as the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (John xx. 21); therefore, "whatsoever" [as to guilt or as to punishment] "thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19).

By virtue of this received power of "loosing," St. Paul (though not one of the Twelve Apostles, but merely a successor of them) granted a plenary indulgence to the poor, incestuous Corinthian.

First, he imposed a public penance upon him (1 Cor v. 5), but then, hearing that he was very repentant, he gave him a plenary indulgence: "To him that is such an one," said he, "this rebuke *is sufficient*. For, what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ" (2 Cor. xxvi. 10).

The Church, in absolving the sinner from the *guilt* of his sin by the Sacrament of Penance, and then afterward remitting the *temporal punish-*

ment still remaining due to the sin, exercises that twofold power which Christ Himself exercised toward the paralytic mentioned in St. John. Christ forgave, first the *sin*, and secondly the temporal punishment, or *bodily infirmity* which had been inflicted as a temporal punishment on account of the sin. "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more lest some worse thing happen thee" (John v. 14).

John Wickliffe and the Hussites denied to the Church the power of granting indulgences. And, later on, Martin Luther denied it also, though, before his fall, he said: "If any one denies the truth of the Pope's indulgences, let him be anathema!" Indulgences may, of course, like every other good thing, be abused. And they were sometimes for the sake of sordid gain. The *abuse*, however, is not to be confounded with the legitimate *use* of indulgences. The Council of Trent has, in a nutshell, expounded the Sacred Scriptures on this subject, and has set the question at rest forever. It says: "Seeing the power of granting indulgences was given to the Church by Christ; and the Church, in the most early ages, did make use of this power as received from Him, the most holy Synod teaches and commands, that the use of indulgences, which is highly beneficial to the Christian people, and approved of by the authority of the Sacred Councils, shall be retained in the Church; and *condemns and anathematizes those who either pronounce them unprofitable, or deny the power of the Church to graut them*" (Sess. 25).

To gain an indulgence it is necessary to be in a state of grace, or, in other words, to be free, at least, from the guilt of mortal sin; and, furthermore, we must be sincerely desirous to amend our lives, and satisfy God's justice by penitential works. But from this, let no one be misled to imagine that good works performed by a person in a state of mortal sin are useless. No; they are not useless. On the contrary, they are most useful, and even necessary, in order to disarm the anger of God, and procure the grace of conversion. Indulgences presuppose penitential works. We shall never be saved unless we "bring forth fruit worthy of penance" (Matt. iii. 8). Penitential works and indulgences should act and react upon each other. Libermann, in his theological treatise on *Penance*, chap. iv., lays down the following practical doctrine: "The safer way is this, to be so intent upon doing works of penance, as if no remedy were to be obtained from indulgences; and to be so earnest in gaining indulgences, as if nothing were to be expected from our own works."

Indulgences, therefore, do not give a pardon for past sins, nor do they give a license to commit sin. To prevent mistakes, let it be clearly understood that indulgences will not save you if you die in mortal sin; for they cannot be of any service ever, nor can they be possibly gained, until we are first free from mortal sin.

The conditions prescribed for gaining any particular indulgence must be all accurately fulfilled: like in a chain there must be no link missing. Whilst performing the conditions you must always have the intention of gaining the indulgence.

This intention must be, at least, virtual. Hence, if we form an actual intention every morning of gaining all the indulgences that may be attached to whatever good works or devotions we may perform during that day; such intention will continue *virtually* during the day, and will suffice to gain the indulgences attached to all our good works of that day.

When the Church grants indulgences she acts as a tender-hearted mother does toward her children: when she sees them in danger and affliction she runs to their rescue. God, of course, sends the temporal punishments, in order to have some atonement made both to Himself and to His Church, as both are offended by sin. He also sends them punishments, in order to recall the sinner and to deter him from relapsing; and, further, to make him be more cautious and watchful for the future. The Church, on the other hand, seeing this divine "rebuke is sufficient" (2 Cor. ii. 6), steps in, as St. Paul did, and, for the sake of the faithful, grants the indulgence, by happily drawing upon the treasury at her disposal; and so, instead of our poor works of atonement, she offers the infinite and superabundant satisfactions of our Divine Redeemer, together with the good works of the Blessed Virgin and of all the saints. "These satisfactions" can never be exhausted, let the Church draw from them what she will. Thus, by indulgences, the "keys" given to the Church are made right use of for the welfare of the faithful, and sufficient and acceptable compensation is made to the offended justice of God.

Ah! my brethren, let us now, whilst we have time, make a good use of indulgences. They are most useful. Who can tell what an amount of temporal punishment we may have standing against us on account of our sins? "The just man falls seven times." We have sinned not once or twice only, as Adam, or Moses, or David, who were visited with so much temporal punishment for their sins. We have, every day, committed venial sins, and, alas! perhaps it would not be too far from the truth to say we have fallen into many mortal sins! If David's sin of vanity deserved to be punished, as it was, by a pestilence causing *seventy thousand deaths* (!) what must be the punishment in store for you, and for me, on account of all the sins we have committed during the days of the years of our lives upon the earth! God's justice is essentially the same now as it was in David's time. "He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Little wonder that the pen should tremble in our hands as we write these words regarding the dreadful punishment that may be awaiting us on account of our sins! The temporal punishment on earth is bad enough, but in Purgatory it is worse still. The torments in Purgatory, according to many of the Saints and Fathers of the Church, are, whilst they last, just as severe as those in hell, in every particular except one, and that is, in Purgatory there is hope of deliverance some time, whereas in hell there is no such hope forever.

Which is it easier, my brethren, to suffer afflictions, and crosses, and disappointments, and humiliations in this life, and pains in Purgatory, or to comply with the easy conditions for gaining Indulgences?

When a wise man knows that there is a thunderstorm going to burst upon him, he will run at once to the place where shelter is to be found. The fool will stand his ground, and will do so just because he is a fool.

Let us all, then, my brethren, praise God forever for His unspeakable mercy and love, in first forgiving us the guilt of sin, and, secondly, forgiving us by indulgences the temporal punishment remaining due. Let us ascend to the top of the highest mountain on earth and call aloud upon all men, and upon all other creatures besides, to join with us in proclaiming God's boundless love for man, as displayed in the work of indulgences. No pen can tell, no mind can think, how grateful for indulgences all those are who have escaped Purgatory, or have been rescued from it, by means of Indulgences. No pen can tell, no mind can contemplate, with what ecstatic rapture these happy souls, now in heaven, gaze upon the beauteous face of God, and how they thank Him, millions of times over, for having given to His Church upon earth the knowledge of indulgences, and the use of the "keys" by which they are granted. "I will give to thee the KEYS of the kingdom of heaven, ... and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven (Matt. xvi.). Amen.

LIST OF INDULGENCES.

We consider it would be useful for many of our pious readers to have some of the principal indulgences that can be gained by the recitation of the Rosary set forth before their eyes. The merchant often succeeds by placing his goods before the view of the public; the merchant's goods, however, are but of the earth, earthly, whereas indulgences are links of a divine chain leading from earth to heaven. Let each person, then, select for himself.

DOMINICAN INDULGENCES.

The following Indulgences may be gained by those using a beads enriched with the Dominican Indulgences:

I. ONE HUNDRED DAYS INDULGENCE is granted for each Our

Father and for each Hail, Mary! to every person who says five decades of the Rosary.

II. AN INDULGENCE OF TEN YEARS AND TEN QUARANTINES is granted to every person who joins with, at least, one other in reciting five decades.

III. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted, once a year, on any day thereof, to any person who says five decades each day, for a year, and complies with the usual conditions. By the words, "*usual conditions,*" we mean a good confession and worthy communion, together with a prayer in accordance with the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

IV. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is also granted to every person, on the usual conditions, who, not being a member of the Confraternity of the Rosary, is in the habit of joining in the recitation of five decades, at least, three times a week.

BRIGITTINE INDULGENCES.

Those who recite the beads, enriched with the Brigittine Indulgences, can gain the following:

I. ONE HUNDRED DAYS INDULGENCE for each Our Father and each Hail, Mary! when, at least, five decades are said. There is an Indulgence, also, of one hundred days, when the Creed is said.

II. AN INDULGENCE OF SEVEN YEARS AND SEVEN QUARANTINES is gained by saying the whole Rosary of fifteen decades.

III. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is gained once a month by every person who complies with the usual conditions and is in the habit of saying five decades every day.

IV. A PLENARY INDULGENCE may be gained once a year, on any day, by every person who shall comply with the usual conditions, and say, at least, five decades, once a day, for a year.

V. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted, at the hour of death, and also on the Feast of St. Bridget (8th October), to those who are in the habit of saying five decades once a week, and who shall comply with the usual conditions.

Those who do not recite, but merely *carry* the Brigittine beads, can gain:

(*a*). AN INDULGENCE OF TWENTY DAYS, if, being truly sorry for their sins, they make an examination of conscience and say three times the Our Father and Hail, Mary!

(*b*). AN INDULGENCE OF FORTY DAYS, if, when they hear the bell tolling for some departing soul, they kneel down and offer a prayer for that soul.

(*c*). ONE HUNDRED DAYS INDULGENCE if they hear Mass, or assist at a sermon, or accompany a priest as he carries the Viaticum to a sick person, or help in the conversion of a sinner, or perform any other good work in honor of our Lord, or the Blessed Virgin, or St. Bridget, and, in addition, say three times the Our Father and Hail, Mary!

THE APOSTOLIC INDULGENCES.

When a beads has been blessed and enriched with the Apostolic Indulgences, it can be used as a powerful instrument to remove temporal punishment. This is evident, from the following Indulgences granted to those who wish to gain them:

1°. A PLENARY INDULGENCE is granted, on the usual conditions, to those who say five decades, at least, once a week; and it may be gained on (*a*), The Epiphany; (*b*), Easter Sunday; (*c*), Ascension Thursday; (*d*), Whit Sunday; (*e*), Trinity Sunday; (*f*), Corpus Christi; (*g*), The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; (*h*), her Purification; (*i*), The Annunciation; (*j*), her Assumption; (*k*), her Nativity; (*l*), The Nativity of St. John the Baptist; (*m*), St. Peter and St. Paul's Day, 29th June; (*n*), St. Andrew's Day, 30th November; (*o*), The Feast of St. James, 25th July; (*p*), St. John, 27th December; (*q*), St. Thomas, 21st December; (*r*), St. Philip and St. James, 1st May; (*s*), St. Bartholomew, 24th August; (*t*), St. Matthew, 21st September; (*u*), St. Simon and St. Jude, 28th October; (*v*), St. Matthias, 24th or 25th of February; (*w*), St. Joseph, 19th March; (*x*), All Saints, 1st November; and (*y*), Christmas Day.

2°. AN INDULGENCE OF SEVEN YEARS AND SEVEN QUARANTINES is granted to all those who say five decades on any other Feast of our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin, besides those above named.

3°. AN INDULGENCE OF FIVE YEARS AND FIVE QUARANTINES is granted to all those who say five decades on any other Feast Day, or Sunday, throughout the year.

4°. AN INDULGENCE OF ONE HUNDRED DAYS to any one who says five decades on any other day.

5°. AN INDULGENCE OF ONE HUNDRED DAYS to those who are in the habit of saying five decades at least once a week.

INDULGENCES OF THE LIVING ROSARY.

1°. Besides the PLENARY INDULGENCE, granted on the first festival after the day of enrolment, there is a plenary indulgence granted, on the usual conditions, to all those who say the decade assigned to them, and it can be gained on (*a*), Christmas Day; (*b*), The Circumcision; (*c*), The Epiphany; (*a*), The Resurrection; (*e*), The Ascension; (*f*), Corpus

Christi; (*g*), Pentecost Sunday; (*h*), Trinity Sunday; (*i*), all the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin; (*j*), the Feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul; (*k*), and of all the Saints.

2°. A Plenary Indulgence can also be gained on the same conditions, once a month, on the third Sunday.

3°. An Indulgence of Seven Years and Seven Quarantines is granted on the day of recitation to those who recite their portion of the Rosary, (*a*), on the Sundays throughout the year; (*b*), on Festival Days, including those Feasts upon which the hearing of Mass is no longer of obligation; (*c*), during the octaves of Christmas, Easter, Corpus Christi, Whitsuntide, the Conception, Nativity, and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

4°. An Indulgence of One Hundred Days is granted to those who recite their portion of the Rosary on days upon which no Festival occurs.

Christ has given His Church the power of granting indulgences, and, judging by the number, and variety, and richness of these indulgences, the Church has most generously used her power. The removal of temporal punishment is thus within the reach of every one. Would that every atom in creation had a tongue to return God thanks for this wondrous favor granted unto men! Millions and billions of praises forever to God! Amen.

THE HOLY ROSARY

"Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."—LUKE i. 48.

THE Holy Rosary is a form of devotion, my brethren, in which "Our Father," and the "Hail, Mary!" and "Glory be to the Father," are said a certain number of times, and the chief mysteries in the life of our Lord and of His Holy Mother are thought over.

The Rosary is divided into three parts or chaplets, and each chaplet into five "decades." A decade consists of "Our Father" *once*, "Hail, Mary!" *ten times*, and *once* "Glory be to the Father." Hence, the whole Rosary consists of fifteen "Our Fathers," one hundred and fifty "Hail, Marys!" and fifteen "Glory be to the Fathers." Beads are used to help in the recital of the Rosary, and the ordinary beads consist of five decades. Whilst saying the decades of the first chaplet it is recommended to meditate upon the five joyful mysteries; whilst saying the second chaplet, to meditate upon the five sorrowful mysteries; and whilst saying the third chaplet, to meditate upon the five glorious mysteries. Though, to gain the Dominican indulgences, and the Brigittine indulgences, also, whenever they may, as they can, be attached to a chaplet of *five* decades, it is sufficient, as well as necessary, to meditate upon some one of the fifteen mysteries.

To gain the Apostolic indulgences no meditation on the mysteries is required. The same is true for the Brigittine indulgence wherever the ordinary Brigittine chaplet of *six* decades is used.

The name of *Brigittine* indulgences is derived from St. Brigitta, of Sweden, who devised the peculiar form of chaplet—*six* decades—to which these indulgences were originally attached. The faculties for attaching the Brigittine and Apostolic indulgences are usually granted at Rome, and in the same formula; the faculties for attaching the Dominican indulgences are granted by the general or local Superior of the Dominican Order.

There are in all six classes of indulgences which may be gained by the recitation of the Rosary, namely: Dominican, Brigittine, Apostolic, Indulgences of Vatican Council, Indulgences of the Confraternity of the Rosary, and the Indulgences of the Living Rosary. What these different indulgences are, and the special conditions for gaining them, can be seen by reading the Raccolta and other works treating on indulgences. When indulgences without any qualification are mentioned the Dominican indulgences are usually referred to.

The fifteen mysteries recommended in the Rosary devotion are an abridgment of the Gospel history of the Incarnation; the life, the sufferings and triumphant victory of Jesus Christ in behalf of man. They should be amongst the principal objects of the devotion of every person, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. The Rosary, as suggesting them, should accordingly be practiced by all.

The devotion of the Rosary was revealed to St. Dominic, in the year 1206, by the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. "Institute the Rosary," said she to the saint, "and it will be a remedy against so many evils." St. Dominic set himself at once in earnest to "institute" the devotion. He preached upon it wherever he went. He taught the people how to recite it. He explained the mysteries, and the many and great advantages to be derived from the practice of this devotion. The Albigensian heresy, raging at the time, was quickly put an end to by the devotion of the Rosary. The eloquence of St. Dominic in his preaching upon this devotion, as a means to put down the heresy, and the glorious success which immediately crowned the prayers of the faithful, at once made the Rosary appear in its true light, as a most beautiful and efficacious form of prayer. And, from that time to this, as it shall be for all time to come, the devotion of the Rosary, or beads, is regarded as the most beautiful, most sublime, most popular, and also the most profitable of all devotions.

The Turkish power threatened at one time to overrun all Christendom with fire and sword. The faithful had recourse to the devotion of the Rosary, and victory was won. For the victory won at the great naval battle at Lepanto, in the year 1571, was ascribed to the influence of the Blessed Virgin, whom the faithful most earnestly invoked in the devotion of the Rosary. To commemorate this victory St. Pius V. instituted the festival of the Rosary, which is held every year on the first Sunday in October.

Again, in the year 1630, a terrible plague raged in Bologne and the surrounding country for miles around. Business was suspended, shops were closed, and more than a third of the inhabitants were swept away! The survivors were filled with terror and dismay. Medical aid and all other human means were tried to stay the ravages of the plague, but without any avail. The people, at length, had recourse to the Rosary, and, oh! praise forever to God, and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the plague instantly disappeared.

But, what shall we say of the efficacy of the Rosary in preserving the

Catholic faith in Ireland during ages of darkness and persecution? For, when a price was set on the head of the Irish Catholic schoolmaster, as well as on the head of the Irish priest, the Irish Catholic parents would not let their children into a Protestant school, and when they grew up, accordingly, unable to read their prayer-book, or any other pious book, the faith was handed down, from parent to child, by means of the Rosary. The Irish people, like Moses, conquered the enemy, and advanced God's glory by means of prayer and the prayer of the Rosary.

St. Charles Borromeo attributed the conversion and sanctification of the faithful of his diocese to the devotion of the Rosary alone.

Pope Gregory XVI. calls the Rosary "a wonderful instrument for the destruction of sin, the recovery of God's grace and the advancement of His glory."

Our present Pope, Leo XIII., is incessant in his inculcation of the devotion of the Rosary. He has added the title of "Queen of the most Holy *Rosary*," to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. And he has strongly recommended the daily recital of the Rosary in every Cathedral throughout Christendom.

The devotion of the Rosary, when practiced publicly in the house every night, is found to be a wonderful means for preserving piety in families. In fact, it brings down daily a shower of the choicest graces. There is scarcely a Catholic family in Ireland that does not recite the Rosary every night. An indulgence of ten years and ten quarantines is granted to all who, conjointly with one or more others, recite upon a blessed beads the ordinary chaplet of five decades of the Rosary. How beautiful, my brethren, to see the faithful assembled together with their beads in hand, reciting the Rosary, whether in their own houses, or in the church, before Mass on the Sunday morning; or, again, at the devotions for Lent, or May, or any of the other devotions throughout the year. Of such occasions Christ solemnly says: "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). And are not the inspired words of the Blessed Virgin then also verified: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke i. 48).

Great indulgences are attached to the recitation of the Beads. When the beads are duly blessed, there are even as many as one hundred days indulgence granted for each "Our Father," and for each "Hail, Mary!" to all those who say five decades each time of recitation.

It may be well to mention, for the further instruction of the faithful, that beads lose their blessing: 1st. When they cease to be the property of the person who first uses them for the purpose of gaining the indulgences. 2d. When they are sold, with or without profit, after having been blessed. But, of course, if a man gets a commission to buy a beads and get it blessed, he can, without endangering the blessing or indulgence, receive from him who entrusted him with the commission, the money expended in the purchase. 3d. If you give away or lend your beads to another to recite prayers on it, neither the giver nor the receiver gains any indulgence.

You see, my brethren, what an advantage it is to have beads, and to have them blessed by the priest. And you see, moreover, what a powerful instrument such a beads is for removing the temporary punishment due to your sins. Who is it, then, that knows he has committed sin, and, consequently, has an amount of temporal punishment awaiting him, either in this life or in purgatory, and still will not get the punishment cancelled by the easy, simple, and efficacious means of reciting the beads? The man that sees a storm approaching, and will not run for shelter, deserves what he gets. The beads are the secure shelter from the terrible storms of affliction and danger. The Blessed Berchmans wished to die holding the beads in his hands.

The Rosary is a form of prayer that gives high honor to God and to the Blessed Virgin, His Mother. When we say, "Our Father," we say the sublime prayer that Jesus Christ Himself taught us. When we say, "Hail, Mary!" we are repeating the glorious salutation with which the Archangel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth greeted the Blessed Virgin. When we say the "Holy Mary," we repeat the beautiful words in which the Church addresses the Mother of God. And when we say, "Glory be to the Father," we honor the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. What other prayers could be more simple or sublime, or more worthy of a Christian?

But it may be objected—saying the "Our Father" and "Glory be to the Father," only *once*, and "Hail, Mary" and "Holy Mary!" *ten* times: is not this honoring the Blessed Virgin ten times as much as God? We answer: by no means is it. For it is to God Himself we pray each of the ten times, and we do so every single time through the *intercession of the* Blessed Virgin. Of God alone we beg grace and mercy, and of the Blessed Virgin we ask only the assistance of her prayers. We believe in the efficacy of the prayers of the Mother of God. And why not? The "continual prayer of a just man availeth much," says St. James (v. 16); therefore, the prayer of her who is "full of grace," and "blessed amongst women," must "avail much." How can the Divine Son, consistently with His model obedience as a *Son*, refuse to grant the reasonable request of *His Own Mother?* Though His time was not yet come, He wrought His first miracle in order to please her. Wherefore St. Liguori says: "The Son is omnipotent by nature, the Mother by grace."

Now, here, my brethren, it must be accurately understood that, to have our prayers acceptable we must obey God's Commandments. The Blessed Virgin, at the marriage feast of Cana, took care to tell the waiters: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, *do* ye" (John ii. 5).

My brethren, let us resolve to let no day pass without reciting the beads. Let us carry beads always about us; and let us love them as we would love a wreath of roses plucked from the flower-gardens of heaven, and presented to us by the fair hands of the Virgin-Mother of God. And as we look upon the beads, let us think of its glorious origin and institution, and its history, and the part that has been given it to play in sweetening the world, rescuing souls and helping them to come in God's good time to the bright land above, where the sweetness and the loveliness of God, and of all heaven, around and afar, are to be seen mirrored in the face of the Blessed Virgin for the countless ages of eternity! "For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Amen.

EXTREME UNCTION

"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord."—JAMES v. 14.

THE Catholic Church, my brethren, guided as she is by the Holy Ghost, takes a constant practical interest in us from the time that we come into this world until we leave it again. At our birth she administers to us the Sacrament of Baptism, whereby we are cleansed from original sin, made Christians, and children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. Later on in life she administers Confirmation, as she does in the case of these sweet and good children here to-day, who are to be made by this sacrament strong and perfect Christians, and to be filled with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Then, again, as soon as we begin to lose God's friendship through sin, she administers the Sacrament of Penance, and thereby remits our sins. And, as a fond mother, that loves her children even as her very life, she administers to us the Blessed Eucharist, and thus gives us spiritual food to support us on our journey to heaven. All these salutary helps and more the Church confers upon us during life; but when life is drawing to a close, and our health begins to give way, then she administers to us the sacrament which she specially keeps in store for those who are about to leave this world, and stand their trial before the Judge. This Sacrament is Extreme Unction. It is so called, because it is the *last* or *Extreme* Unction that a child of the Church receives. The other unctions are used at Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and at certain consecrations.

II. The Catholic Church is most anxious to have the subject of Extreme Unction clearly and accurately understood by all her children. Hence, the Council of Trent has directed that Extreme Unction "should form a subject of *frequent* instruction, not only inasmuch as it eminently becomes (the priest) to unfold and explain the mysteries which appertain to salvation, but also because the faithful, frequently reflecting that death is the inevitable doom of all men, will repress depraved desires" (Con. Trent, chap. vi., part 2).

Other subjects may of their own intrinsic nature call forth higher flights of fancy and more impassioned oratory; but still the subject of Extreme Unction is second to none of them in its quiet native beauty and soul-saving power; nor am I unwilling to believe that if we would reflect this morning, for a short time, with the proper dispositions, on its (*a*) institution by Jesus Christ, on its (*b*) wondrous nature, and on its (*c*) supernatural effects upon (*d*) the soul and (*e*) the body, we shall not go home altogether fasting.

III. The Council of Trent has conclusively proved that Extreme Unction possesses the true nature of a sacrament, that it has been instituted by Christ our Lord, and promulgated by St. James: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (v. 14, 15).

IV. Now, my brethren, since Christ our Lord has instituted the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, it is evident that it must be necessary in the Divine economy of man's salvation; for Christ would not, nor even could He, institute a sacrament without a reason. Hence, the Catholic Church, which Christ promised to be with all days, has since her first establishment in the world never ceased to teach and practice the doctrine of Extreme Unction. And before she ordains any one of her priests she demands a promise from him that he will administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction whenever required by any of his flock, even at the risk of his very life.

Moreover, there is no time at which the soul stands in such need of spiritual help as at the approach of death. For, it is then that Satan, knowing well that he has but a short time, makes his last and fiercest attack upon the soul, in order to unfit her for heaven, and to finally snatch her from the arms of Jesus, who died for her! "Woe to the earth and to the sea," says St. John, in the Apocalypse; "because the devil is come down into you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (xii. 12). "There are spirits," says Ecclesiasticus, "that are created for vengeance, and in their fury they lay on grievous torments; in the time of destruction [*i.e.*, in the time of death], they shall pour out their force" (xxxix. 33, 34).

"Though our adversary seeks and seizes opportunities all our life long, to be able in any way to devour our souls; yet is there no time wherein he strains more vehemently all the powers of his craft to ruin us utterly, and to make us fall, if he possibly can, even from trust in the mercy of God, than when he perceives the end of our life to be at hand" (Sess. xiv.).

But, in order that each one may realize the importance of this subject still more, just imagine, my brethren, that you are, as you shall one day be, stretched sick and helpless upon your death-bed. There is no hope within you of rising from it any more. You grow worse from day to day, till at length the end has come. The film of death comes upon your eyes; the clammy pallor of death comes upon your face; the rattle of death comes into your throat; the cold grave is about to open and receive your body, the case and prison of the soul; you are soon to be separated forever from your house and home and friends, and from every creature upon earth. The memory of the sins, perhaps black and countless, which you have committed during the days of the years of your life, now comes up before you, and fills you in your weak moment with a fear and a terror, heightened beyond description by the burning thought of the searching examination of the Judge, and the sentence from His lips that shall determine your happiness or misery for all eternity! In the midst of these unusual and trying circumstances Satan, your enemy, will tempt you to the last degree; at one time to despair, at another to presumption. And if he finds the contest going against him, he will call out the whole force of hell in order to strike you down, and to secure you for himself! Ah! my brethren, a poor mariner about to sink with his lightning-struck vessel in the midst of the sea, and looking out his last despairing look at the rolling waves that submerge him, gives you but a faint idea of how the sinner shall feel when, from the solemn standpoint of a death-bed, he shall see his sins rising in their numbers, countless as the black sea waves that are lashed into fury by an angry storm, and hastening to swallow him down into the gloomy depths from whence he shall never again return!

Ah! my brethren, how the sinner in these agonizing circumstances will raise his suppliant hands and eyes to his Great Creator for help. And, praise forever to God, the needful help comes to him in the shape of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. For, "as in the other sacraments, He (God) prepared the greatest aids, whereby during life Christians may preserve themselves whole from every more grievous spiritual evil; so did He guard the close of life by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, as with a most firm defense" (Council of Trent).

V. Extreme Unction, then, as your Catechism thoughtfully tells you, is "a sacrament which gives grace to die well, and is instituted chiefly for the spiritual strength and comfort of dying persons."

VI. The matter of this sacrament, or, in other words, the outward *material* part of it, is oil of olives, consecrated by the bishop, and applied by the priest to the principal organs of the body through which sin enters the soul. The oil suggests the salutary effects which are produced in the soul. For, as the oil used by the Grecian athletes strengthened them for the contest, so does the sacramental oil, used by the Catholic

Church in anointing, strengthen her children for their contest with Satan. The priest anoints the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands and feet of the sick person, and whilst doing so, he makes use of a *form* of words to correspond with the different organs so anointed.

VII. The affectionate solicitude which our holy mother, the Catholic Church, takes in us, appears in a special manner from the words of divine eloquence which she puts into the mouth of her priests when administering the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: "O Lord Jesus Christ, as we in our humility enter this house, may eternal felicity, may divine prosperity, may serene joy, may fruitful charity, may everlasting health also enter with us. May the approach of demons be forbidden this place, and the angels of peace be present.

"Heal, we beseech Thee, our Redeemer, by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, the languors of the sick man; cure his wounds and forgive his sins; remove from him every pain of mind and body; mercifully grant him again full health, as well internal as external" (Ord. ad. Sac^{a}.).

THE EFFECTS OF EXTREME UNCTION.

"And the prayer of Faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."—JAMES v. 15.

Extreme Unction gives *internal* health; it gives special grace to die well; it strengthens the soul against temptations; it comforts her in her darkest hour; it gives her confidence in the mercy of God; and courage to go and stand before His dread tribunal. Oh! my brethren, it is when death approaches that courage is wanted indeed. For, says the Scripture, "They shall come [to the judgment] with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them" (Wisdom iv. 20).

Extreme Unction relieves the soul from the languor and torpor, and increased proneness to evil, and the other spiritual infirmities which she has contracted by sin. All these *relics or remnants of sin* it searches out with a keen, mysterious penetration of its own, and swiftly destroys them one and all. The painstaking grace of this wondrous sacrament cleanses the soul with a perfect, final cleansing. It makes her sweet and beauteous, and lovable once more, such as she came from the beautifying waters of Baptism, when she exhaled a fragrance like unto the wandering fragrance of Jesus upon earth.

Extreme Unction remits venial sins, and even mortal sins, whenever the sick person is unable, from any cause, to make his confession, though sincerely anxious to do so; "and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James v. 14).

Thus, this sacrament not only confers sanctifying grace, and destroys the relics or remnants of sin in the soul, but it even gives multitudinous actual graces for any given spiritual emergency to every worthy receiver.

Oh! my brethren, how prodigal the Precious Blood is in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction! How amazing are its supernatural activities! How ingenious it is in its numberless operations! What a wondrous variety in the streams of grace that come through it to the soul! Why, if it were only given to us to see these graces in all their charming variety, we should be likely to compare them to the lovely network of some vast river-system, which gladdens, and fertilizes all the land that lies in its way, and which, like a reflex of heaven, flashes up continuously to the skies, as so much outward additional light and song and glory to Him who rules on high! Ah! my brethren, what exquisite groups of the deep mysteries of God's beautifying love lie sweetly compressed in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction! What an important part this last sacrament plays every day at the hands of a priest in his apostolic work of saving immortal souls, and peopling heaven with saints!

But, my brethren, Extreme Unction also gives *external* health. It has been instituted by Christ our Lord to be medicinal not alone for the soul, but medicinal also for the body. The Apostles "cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick *and healed them*" (Mark vi. 13). Hence, when administering Extreme Unction, the priest prays that the sick person may recover. And God will hear this prayer, provided He sees that it will tend to the spiritual welfare of the sick person. "Nor should the faithful," says the Council of Trent, "doubt that these holy and solemn prayers which are used by the priest, not in his own person, but in that of the Church, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, are heard by God. . . . . However, should the sick person not recover it (health) in these days, that is to be attributed, not to any defect of the Sacrament, but rather to the weaker faith of a great part of those who are anointed with the sacred oil, or by whom it is administered; for the Evangelist bears witness that the Lord 'wrought not many miracles' amongst His own 'because of their unbelief'" (Matt. xiii. 58).

Extreme Unction, then, is calculated to hasten the recovery, rather than the death of the sick person. Hence, all well-instructed Catholics, through their love of the *soul* and *life* of their sick friend or neighbor, will call in the priest as soon as there appears a probable danger of death. Of course, if the anointing be put off too long, it would be tempting God to expect a recovery through it; and, moreover, the patient would thereby run the risk of dying without the sacrament altogether, or of receiving it when he is insensible or unconscious. It is well to understand that a sick person will receive the grace of this sacrament in more abundant measure when his mind and reason are unimpaired, than what he otherwise would.

Here the springs of fraternal love are called into play. "By this," says Christ, "shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John xiii. 35). If you have real fraternal love for your neighbor, you will have a golden opportunity of showing it to him when he is sick and in need of help. "A friend in need is a friend indeed"; and so, my brethren, as soon as you see that your friend is in need of the *help* to die well, you will get it for him at once: you will call in the priest. I am sure that in this parish, like all other well-disciplined parishes, when giving the "sick calls" to the priest, you consult for his convenience as far as you can.

Extreme Unction cannot be administered to any one but a Christian in danger of death by sickness, and who has already committed some sin, or, at least, has been capable of committing it.

When receiving this sacrament "we should be truly sorry for our sins, and resigned to the will of God." A person dying in his sin, such as a man dying stupidly drunk, cannot receive Extreme Unction. Ah! my brethren, how pained I felt on one occasion (in another country) when on the mission in England, I was called in to administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to a dying man, and found that I could not, for he was dying stupidly drunk, and so was incapable of receiving any sacrament.

In time of sickness we should be truly resigned to the sweet will of God. Whatever God wills, He wills it for the best. Hence, the sincere Christian wishes to recover from his sickness only in order to do penance for his sins, to improve himself in virtue, and to edify all around him by his amendment of life.

But, my brethren, though lawful and natural for any one to wish to recover from sickness, what advantage, after all, is it to recover? Would it not be as sweet to the soul to have her weary pilgrimage here in the body at an end? Would it not be as desirable to be dissolved and away with Christ, as it would be to remain longer sojourning in this valley of tears? What pleasure is it to remain, seeing that every pathway in this world has its brier, every rose its thorn, and every honey-bee its sting? If we recover from one sickness, have we not to yield to another, and to death, either prepared or unprepared, in the long run? St. Augustine, commenting upon our Saviour's restoring health to the sick, says: "The true health of our bodies, which we expect from the Lord, will only then take place when we rise again the last day from the grave. Then whatever shall live will die no more—whatever shall be healed will be sick no more—whatever shall be filled shall hunger and thirst no more—whatever shall be renewed will never grow old again. But at present in these actions of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the eyes of the blind, which He opened, will be closed again in death; the limbs of the paralytic, which He braced with strength, will again be unnerved; whatever He healed of our mortal bodies, in time, will all of them fail again at last. But the soul, whose infirmities He also came to cure, whose sins He came to forgive, that will fail no more, but pass to a life which, being eternal, is secure against all the assaults of death."

Eighty thousand persons die every day! There are many sick in Israel: but there is balm in Gilead, there is a physician there. There is a sacrament in the Catholic Church which, at the time of death, when it is most wanted, will change all the wells of bitterness in the soul into springs of freshness and of life.

But see the physician of the soul, the good *Soggarth Aroon*, how he hastens to the bedside of the dying man! And the dying man, in due course is *yourself*. He hears your last confession; administers to you the Viaticum or Blessed Eucharist; and then, in the midst of significant, reverential surroundings, the Last Sacrament, or Extreme Unction. The Precious Blood is at work in its congenial sphere. The beauty of the Divine Mind seems specially suffused around it now. The aroma of the Root of Jesse invites the angels to the spot. But, meanwhile your attendants can see that you are sinking—sinking—sinking! The light of this world gradually leaves your eyes, and gradually instead comes the unwonted light of another world. You are already in the suburbs of heaven. The interminable vistas of Paradise stretch away in gleaming grandeur before you. The unfolding beauty of the City of God melts you. Its glory masters you. A sweet calmness comes over you. A voice, as of far-off music, rises up from some deep sanctuary within your soul. It is a foretaste of the glad sentence, each word of which is beauteous as an unexpected sunrise: "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 23).

The Face of God, the Beatific Vision, bursts full and clear upon your view. The Fingers of the Eternal sweep down the keys of His stupendous instruments of music to welcome you into heaven, and to ingrain a joy unutterable upon you! A keen thrill runs through you and makes you feel like unto heaven itself. The battle is fought at last; the victory is fairly won, and heaven is the prize, and heaven forever! A crown inlaid with imperishable diamonds is placed with acclaim upon your now royal brow. A shout of joy from the Angels, loud, as from numbers without number, rises aloft and rings through the whole heavens. Your name and deeds are interwoven with the rich web of heaven's music. And in presence of all, the Blessed God gives you the Kiss of Peace forevermore!

But, my brethren, fancy, if you can, how your soul, now enraptured in ecstatic bliss, will join with the Angels and their Queen, in singing aloud the mercies of the Lord, and especially His great mercy in having given us that Last Sacrament, the Extreme Unction, to prepare us to enter acceptably into the presence of God, and to share in His glory, and in His kingdom in heaven, for all eternity. Amen.

ON BAPTISM.

"And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize?"—JOHN i. 25

ADAM, our first parent, committed sin by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Paradise, and in this sin of Adam all his children, except one, have sinned—"And in Adam's sin we have all sinned." Wherefore, every child born into this world is born an enemy of God, with the malignant stain of original sin, or the sin inherited from our first parents, full and deep upon his soul. And whilst in this state the soul cannot enter heaven; for "nothing defiled shall enter heaven." But Almighty God, in His infinite mercy for man, has instituted a sovereign remedy in the sacrament of Baptism, whereby original sin is remitted. And thus by Baptism we are "born again" into a new life in Jesus Christ, we become Christians and children of God, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. "And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize?" Baptism is necessary for salvation; for, says our Lord, "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). Hence, children who die unbaptized cannot enter into heaven, nor shall they ever see the face of God. They only enjoy the highest degree of natural felicity. Martyrdom, however, supplies the place of actual baptism where the sacrament cannot possibly be had. So also does the desire of baptism united with perfect repentance in the case of an adult who dies before he has an opportunity of receiving actual baptism.

Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of Baptism. He Himself, though He had no need of it, yet, for our example, was baptized by St. John, in the river Jordan: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him. . . . . And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened to Him; and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 13, etc.).

The Apostles preached the doctrine of baptism; they personally administered it to all, without exception, both old and young, that were converted to Christianity. They regarded the administration of baptism as an essential part of their divine commission: "Going, therefore, teach all nations. *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). The Catholic Church, founded upon the Apostles, is still without change in teaching the necessity of Baptism as an indispensable means of salvation, and as the source of every grace and blessing.

Baptism incorporates us into the mystic body of Christ, so that we are made by it members, one of another, with Christ for our Head. Through Christ, our Head, we at once become sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (John i.). "We are translated," says the Council of Trent, "by the laver of regeneration from that state in which we were born children of the first Adam, into the state of grace and of the adoption of the sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour." Oh! how boundless and unfathomable is the love displayed in the sacrament of Baptism, whereby wretched man, from his degraded state, is raised to the dignity of a son of God, made a member and a brother of Christ, and a living temple of the Holy Ghost!

At Baptism our souls are washed from all stain of sin, "They are cleansed," as St. Paul says (Ephes. v. 26), "by the laver of water in the word of life." This *water* and *word* are the *outward* signs of that *inward* grace by which the soul is *cleansed* and sanctified, and they form an essential part of the sacrament of Baptism. The Church commissions her priests to administer Baptism. But, though a priest is the ordinary and proper minister of Baptism, yet, in cases of necessity, that is, where the child to be baptized is in danger of dying before the priest can reach, any layman or woman can baptize, and should baptize. Such baptism is called *private baptism.* Many souls now in heaven owe their enjoyment of the Beatific Vision to private baptism. You will ask then: what is the correct way for administering private baptism? It is simply this: by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized, saying at the same time, and with the intention of doing what the true Church does: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Any alteration or defect in this form of words would make the baptism at once invalid. Care then must be taken that the exact form be used: "*I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" The word "Amen" is not a part of the form. The words must be said by the person who baptizes, and said whilst he is pouring out the water on the head of the person to be baptized.

Now, observe the goodness and wisdom of our Blessed Lord in the institution and administration of this most necessary sacrament. Seeing the necessity we have of Baptism in order to enter into the spiritual life of grace, He has made everything about it simple and easy. He has selected as *matter* for the sacrament what is most common and easy to be found everywhere, namely, water—water from the clouds or from the river, from the fountain or from the sea. The *minister*, in case of necessity, can be any lay person, man or woman, Catholic or non-Catholic, Jew, heretic, or infidel, provided he baptizes, as I have explained, and has the intention of doing what the true Church does. And the *form* is the simplest: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

At Baptism there is imprinted on the soul a *character*, or spiritual mark, which can never be effaced. This mark is set as a seal either for greater glory if the soul be saved, or for greater confusion if it be lost. It is a mark which distinguishes the Christian from the rest of mankind.

At Baptism Satan is dislodged from the soul: "Depart from him, unclean spirit," says the priest in administering Baptism, "and make room for the Holy Ghost." The three theological virtues,—Faith, Hope, and Charity,—are infused into the soul, and a title to actual graces is established, whereby the person baptized may keep his baptismal vows, and live always in a state of grace.

But, though all stain of sin is entirely removed from the soul at Baptism, yet there remains an innate concupiscence which continually prompts to sin. This concupiscence is not a sin; nor are its promptings or workings sinful, unless indeed they be fully and deliberately consented to. "Concupiscence," says the Council of Trent, "is not in itself a sin." This concupiscence will have to be overcome by prayer; hence, St. Thomas says: "After Baptism continual prayer is necessary to man in order that he may enter heaven; for, though by Baptism our sins are remitted, there still remains concupiscence to assail us from within, and the world and the devil to assail us from without."

The title of "Christian," which we receive at Baptism, is a title of honor, of dignity, and eminence. It is a title far beyond all earthly titles. "All the titles and honors of the world," said the Emperor Theodosius, "are as nothing in comparison with the dignified title of Christian."

Do we appreciate our title of "Christian"? Do we glory in that name? Do we rejoice at being called after *Christ?* Do we sustain the character of Christian which we profess to be our calling? Is our life truly Christian? Is it like unto that of Christ, full of meekness and humility: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart"? (Matt. xi. 29). Is it full of charity: "God has loved us and delivered Himself up for us" (John iii. 16)? Is our life a life of *living* faith? For, "Faith without good works is dead" (James ii. 26). Is our life in keeping with our baptismal vows? Are we fighting nobly against temptations under the standard of Christ and His Church? Have we deserted our colors for the sake of Satan, and the world, and the flesh? Are we carrying to the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ the white robe of Baptism unstained, and pure, and undefiled? Dear Christian, keep the burning light of faith always in your heart, keep your Baptism without reproof, observe the commandments of God, and when the Lord, to whom you have been espoused at Baptism, shall come to His nuptials, you will gladly go forth to meet Him together with all the saints in the heavenly court, and you will taste of the sweetness of heaven, and of its joys, and its glories unparalleled; and you will lay your head sweetly to rest upon the bosom of God, there to feel the Sacred Heart throbbing with joy and with untold love for you unto all eternity.

MORTAL SIN.

"Behold, a leper came and adored Him, saying: Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed."—MATT. vii. 2, 3.

AFTER our Lord had preached His sermon on the Mount a leper came to Him, and said: "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." Leprosy was a common disease amongst the Jews; it was a most loathsome form of disease; it disfigured the whole body: any one affected with it was banished from society. The leprosy was a figure of mortal sin in the soul; for mortal sin makes the soul loathsome in the sight of God, and excludes it from the kingdom of heaven. Mortal sin is a grievous offense or transgression against the law of God. This grievous offense may be committed either by thought, by word, by deed, or by omission. To constitute a mortal sin the internal or external act must be *grievously evil*, or *considered* to be so by conscience; and, furthermore, the act must be placed with *full advertence* and *full consent*. If any one of these conditions be wanting, the sin, which otherwise would be mortal, becomes venial. Any number, however great, of venial sins, would not constitute a mortal sin. Yet venial sins lead on the sinner, step by step, to the commission of mortal sin: "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (Eccles. xix. 1).

Mortal sin is so called because it kills the soul by depriving it of its true life, which is sanctifying grace, and because it brings everlasting death and damnation upon the soul: "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die" (Ezech. xviii. 20). Mortal sin is, therefore, a deplorable evil. It is destructive in its effects, it is dismal in its consequences. It carries with it the gloomy surroundings of death. St. Augustine says that, "a sinner in a state of mortal sin carries a corpse within himself, inasmuch as he carries a dead soul in a living body."

Mortal sin is a grievous offense against God. This offense is immeasurable in its malice. The measure of an offense is determined by the nature of the offense and the dignity of the person offended in relation to the dignity of the person who offers the offense. Therefore mortal sin must be immeasurable in its malice; for, in addition to the offense being of its own nature grievously provoking, it is offered to infinite majesty, and by one who is only a worm of the earth: infinite dignity on one side, and vileness, and dust, and ashes on the other! Who could think, that man, dependent, insignificant being that he is, would thus raise himself up in defiance of the Almighty? and strike at Him who sitteth on the throne of heaven and earth!

Mortal sin is the greatest evil upon earth or in hell. Indeed, it is the parent of all evils, it is the parent of Satan, it is the parent of hell. It is a monster ravaging the world and causing innumerable souls to go down into the gloomy pit, the smoke whereof ascendeth up forever and ever!

Mortal sin committed by any creature of God is sad to contemplate; the mortal sin committed by a Christian, however, is specially enormous. A Christian at his baptism makes solemn vows to renounce Satan and all his works and pomps, and agents; but by mortal sin he violates all these vows; he deserts his colors, he crosses over to the camp of the enemy; he joins in the rebellion against God, his Leader and his Captain; nay, more, he tramples upon the Blood of his Saviour, he prefers Barabbas to Jesus. St. Augustine says that, "by every mortal sin that a Christian commits he sells his soul to the devil, and for his salary and recompense he receives nothing but a momentary satisfaction, a brutal pleasure, a filthy delight, a sordid, perishable interest."

By mortal sin the sinner laughs at God's threats and despises Him. Hence, Almighty God complains through the mouth of the prophet Isaias: "I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me" (Isai. i. 2).

The Christian who commits a mortal sin is guilty of ingratitude to God; and this on several counts. God has created us, and conserved us, and watched over us day and night, and clothed us, and given us every breath that we have drawn. He has prepared a kingdom for us in heaven, He has given us the knowledge of it, and a promise of it if we remain faithful to Him; moreover, the Eternal Son of God has come down in pure mercy and love for us from His throne in heaven, and taken on Himself our human nature, with our slave-chains, and our crimes, and treasons, and sins against His Father, the great King. He has mercifully substituted Himself in our place, and generously laid down His life for us in order to open heaven for us, and to rescue us from sin and hell. We are, therefore, bound by great and countless titles to feel gratitude, and to show the same to God. But when mortal sin is committed, oh! where is the gratitude? Alas! mortal sin is the expression of ingratitude, base, black, and shameful!—even the irrational animal will show gratitude for a morsel of food. And the sinner, by committing mortal sin, shows not only ingratitude, but "crucifies again the Son of God and makes a mockery of Him" (Heb. vi. 6). It is of this that the Lord complains in the words of David: "If my enemy had reviled me I would verily have borne with it. . . . . But thou, my friend and familiar, who didst take sweetmeats with me" (Ps. liv. 13).

The malignity of mortal sin appears from the injury which it does to the soul. It strips the soul of the incomparable advantages and beauties of grace. A soul in the state of grace possesses a heavenly beauty, a nameless charm, a halo of glory, an odor of sweetness. There is nothing on earth to compare with the beauty and brilliancy of a soul in a state of grace; it is the reflex of God's beauty. The surpassing loveliness of God is fully mirrored in it; like as in the summer, when the joyous brilliancy of the noonday sun is reflected in the bosom of some placid lake. In the expressive language of Scripture a soul in the state of grace is a "queen," a "spouse of Christ," a "temple of the Holy Ghost," a "daughter of the King." "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for He is the Lord thy God. All the glory of the King's daughter is within, in golden borders clothed round with varieties." A soul in the state of grace shares in the communion of saints, has its name written in golden characters in the Book of Life, and is united to God Himself by a golden link of love. But the moment the will deliberately consents to a mortal sin the link of love is broken, God's friendship is lost, the beauty of grace is gone, and its sweetness and splendor and all the merit of its good works: "All his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered" (Ezech. viii. 24). The sinner's name is struck out from the Book of Life; he is robbed of his title to heaven, which without sin, neither malice of man nor rage of devils can rob him of. He is disinherited; he is degraded; his soul becomes a black, vile, loathsome thing, an abominable slave of Satan, a habitation of unclean spirits, an object of God's wrath. God is dethroned in the soul, and the "abomination of desolation" stands in the temple of the living God. Oh! sad, sad is the havoc of mortal sin!

Again, the punishments inflicted by God upon mortal sin show how great must be its malice. I speak not now of the devouring fire of hell kindled by the breath of God in punishment of mortal sin, I speak merely of the temporal punishments. And these have been swift, and signal, and terrible. It was for mortal sin that our first parents were driven out of Paradise, stripped of original justice and innocence, and condemned to death with all their posterity. It was for mortal sin, the murder of his brother, that Cain was cast a fugitive upon the earth; and at last sent down a victim to burn in hell; it was for mortal sin that the flood-gates of heaven were open, and the foundations of the great deep broken up, and all the human race, except a chosen few, summarily swept away from the face of the earth; it was for mortal sin that the fire and brimstone fell upon the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrha; it was for mortal sin that the earth opened out and swallowed down Coré and his wicked companions alive into hell; it was for mortal sin that the Jews were led more than once into captivity; it is for mortal sin that God sends wars and famines, and plagues and sickness, and nameless miseries and death.

But, again, is there not a stupendous fact on record which, trumpet-tongued, speaks forth the awful malice of mortal sin? And that fact is the Passion and Death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Every stroke of the hammer which drove the nails through the hands and feet of the Man-God tells what the malice of mortal sin must be; every shudder which the Saviour suffered in His agony tells what the malice of mortal sin must be; every drop of His Blood which marked the royal road from Gethsemani on to Calvary, tells what the malice of mortal sin must be. Yea, more, every sentence pronounced upon the reprobate by Him who tempers justice with mercy tells of the malice of mortal sin; every fruitless tear of agonizing fire shed by the damned below, tells, and shall tell for all eternity, what the malice of mortal sin must be!

These truths are sufficient to convince us of the enormous malice of mortal sin; they are sufficient to strike a Christian with utter horror of it. But there is another truth, solemn in its significance, which, taken in conjunction with the malice and punishment of mortal sin, is enough to arouse the guilty sinner from his lethargy of sin, and that is the awful uncertainty of death. You know not the day nor the hour, for death will come like a "thief in the night when *you least expect* him" (Matt. xxiv. 43).

The all-merciful God promises forgiveness to every repentant sinner, but He does not promise to give time or all-moving grace for repentance, if the conversion be put off from day to day. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." "They shall cry to the Lord, *when it is too late*, and He will hide His face from them at that time." "He will laugh at their destruction. They shall die in their sins." "Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

If, to-day, you hear the Lord's voice calling you to do penance, harden not your hearts. Resolve, generously and wisely, to avoid mortal sin, to fly from it as from the face of a serpent, or the eye of a basilisk. Resolve to do full penance for any grievous sin which, in your life, you may have committed. Make no delay in doing penance. Delays are dangerous. They only rivet the chains of the enemy, and aggravate the disease of sin. If robbers had plundered your house, and carried off everything precious and valuable, how speedily you would pursue them in order to recover what they had carried off. If you were attacked by a dangerous disease do you wait till the last moment to call in a physician? How gladly you submit to the most painful cures, and bear the sharpest operations of physic and surgery; make, therefore, no delay in doing penance.

There is balm in Gilead, there is a physician there. There is full forgiveness awaiting you at the tribunal of confession; there you will be taken kindly and gently; be not afraid of anything but remaining away in sin. Oh! joy untold when the lost sheep is found, when the prodigal child returns home, and the best robe is put upon him. There was joy in heaven when Peter rose from his fall; there was joy there when Mary Magdalen forced her way through all obstacles and ran to the feet of Jesus, and kissed them, and washed them with her tears of repentance and wiped them with her hair. Oh! there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that does penance *for his mortal sin* than over "ninety-nine just who need not penance" (Matt. xv. 7).

DUTY OF PARENTS.

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit."—MATT. vii. 17.

ST. LIGUORI says that from this parable we are to learn that a good father brings up good children. This rule, no doubt, like all other rules, admits of exceptions; but they are few. Hence, we see how necessary it is for parents to be really good themselves, to educate their children properly, and to bring them up in the fear and love of God. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

From the very beginning all civilized nations have looked upon the education of children as an object of the greatest importance. In every country and in every age institutions have been erected for the education of youth. Kings and Emperors have considered such institutions as necessary for the safety and well-being of the State, and have justly believed that without them they could have neither good citizens nor useful members of society.

The education of children has been ever regarded by the Church with the greatest solicitude. St. Chrysostom says: "We have a great deposit in children; let us attend to them with great care." They are the "lambs" of the flock which the Good Shepherd loves, and desires to see fed as well as the sheep. Children are specially dear to Him who instructed them with His own divine lips. "Suffer the little children," said He, "to come unto me, and forbid them not" (Mark x. 14).

To parents especially belongs the duty of educating their children. With them the children spend most of their time. Children are given by God to parents, not as a present which they can dispose of at pleasure, but as a trust for which a very strict account must be given to God. St. Paul strongly rebukes those parents who neglect the careful education of their children: "If any man," says he, "have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8). Some parents foolishly imagine that they do their duty toward their children if they provide for their temporal wants, and settle them down comfortably in the world. But this is a great mistake; for it is not for this alone that children are given by God to parents, but for a higher object far: they are given in order to be trained up in the fear and love of God. Upon the due fulfilment of this duty then depends, in a large measure, the eternal as well as the temporal welfare of both parents and children.

In what, therefore, consists the proper education of children? St. Paul sums it up in a few words. He says it consists in *discipline* and *correction*. "And you, fathers," he says, "provoke not your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4). A good father should frequently gather his children around him, and carefully instil into their young susceptible minds the "discipline" of the Lord, the holy fear and love of God. He should teach them as far as he can the principal mysteries of religion, the Unity and Trinity of God, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour. He should teach them their prayers, explain to them the Commandments of God and of His Church, their duty as Christians to God and His priests, their duty to their parents and to their neighbors. He should explain to them the sacraments, and the great necessity there is of receiving especially the sacraments of Penance or the Blessed Eucharist frequently and always worthily. The father should point out to his children the dangers as to faith and morals to which youths are exposed in these evil days in which we live, and how impossible it is for any one to escape perdition unless he be well grounded in the principles of virtue and religion. Nor is it the father alone who is bound to teach the child—the mother is also equally bound.

But it is not sufficient for parents to instruct their children merely by words, they must teach them likewise by example; they must illustrate their words by example, practice and theory must go hand in hand together; example is more powerful than words; words sound, but example thunders; words teach, but example draws. What effect can a parent's words have upon a child, when the child sees them contradicted by example? Children believe their eyes rather than their ears, and they take the parent's example, whether good or bad, as the test of sincerity. Children are influenced much by their parents' lives: hence, we sometimes hear them say: "We don't want to be better than our parents." Nature prompts them to take their parents as their particular models, and thus the lives of parents are reproduced in their children. What a blessing for a child to have good parents! With what irresistible force does that good parent speak to his child, who practices what he preaches! How the teaching of all the virtues, religious, social, and domestic, prevails from his lips with double force! Parents, if your children see you frequent the sacraments, assist regularly at Holy Mass and at sermons, abstain from all unnecessary intoxicating drink; if they see you fly from detraction, and quarrelling, and obscene, double-meaning words; if they see you avoid all bad company, and discountenance those vile, dangerous books and novels, then, indeed, your children will go often to Holy Communion; they will be regular in their attendance at Holy Mass and at sermons, they will shun bad company and avoid bad books. Oh! what an alarming deluge of bad literature there is in the world! how the innocent minds and pure hearts of children are corrupted by the bad books and bad novels of the present day; how many young souls have been robbed through these books of their beautiful baptismal innocence! What a vast number of persons Satan has at work in the garrets and cellars of large cities writing these novels according to his suggestions! What an immense number of agents he has circulating them throughout the world! Indeed, wherever you go, you find the press teeming with those dangerous, filthy novels, and licentious infidel works. They stare you from the windows in every town; their pages are full of insidious poison; to read them is to inhale that fatal, abominable miasma which kills the soul. Against such vile and dangerous works no efforts on the part of parents can be too great in order to protect the faith and morals of their children. A parent should at once burn any such book that he finds in the house. Oh! how children will accuse their parents in the day of judgment for their neglect in this particular.

Correction forms an important part of a parent's duty. The parent who neglects to correct his child is guilty of sin, and brings down God's anger upon himself and his posterity. We read in the sacred Scripture (1 Kings ii. 23), that Heli neglected the due correction of his sons, and for this Almighty God severely punished him and all his posterity. The correction of a child is the mark of love: "He that spareth the rod," says Solomon, "hateth his son; but he that loveth him, correcteth him betimes" (Prov. xiii. 24). "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, and the rod of correction shall drive it away" (Prov. xii. 15). "The child that is left his own will bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. xxix. 15).

Now, how is this correction to be given, for there is room for too much as well as for too little? A good Christian parent will always temper severity with mildness, will never use the hard word when the gentle would do. Whenever you see there is a prudent necessity for correcting your children, always correct them with mildness and calmness, and uniform gentleness and love. Gentleness is the master-key of every heart. Show your children that you correct them only for their own good; never let them see you in a passion or anger when correcting them. If you be in a passion at their conduct, wait until the passion is all over, and then firmly and dutifully correct them, otherwise the correction will lose its value. It may be too severe, and thus be sinful; and, moreover, the children will think it is given rather through anger than through a real desire for their advantage or improvement. The father and mother should always act in concert when correcting their children: they should, as far as possible, be of one mind and of one word, and they should be ever and always guided by reason and religion.

It is while the child is young especially that the good parent should be busy in correcting him, otherwise the child will not be corrected in time; after-remedies come too late—the twig may be easily bent, but the tree cannot. The heart of a child is like wax near a fire, you can easily shape it as you please; it is like a well-cultivated field: if you sow good seed in it, it will in due time produce fruit a hundred-fold; it is like a clean sheet of paper, you can write on it good things or bad, and when once written they are hard to be effaced. As the child is, such is the man: "A young man," says Solomon, "according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6).

God has attached a premium or reward to the proper education of children, inasmuch as the parents' virtues and good dispositions are reproduced in their children. A child will generally have his parents' ways: "Instruct thy son," says Solomon, "and he shall refresh thee, and give delight to thy soul" (Prov. xxix. 17).

Oh, what a delight good parents take in teaching their children! how carefully they point out to them their duties; how they tell them what is right from what is wrong; how carefully they keep their children to school every day, and prepare them for their first Confession and first Communion, and for their Confirmation. They do not leave their children's education altogether in the hands of strangers, for they wisely say to themselves: "Who has a better right to teach the child than the parent has? who is nearer to the child?" Indeed, it must not be forgotten, that the parent has opportunities of teaching the child which no one else has. A priest may preach, and exhort, and reprove, but all his zealous efforts will be in vain unless they be seconded by the exertions of the parents. He cannot prevent the harvest of ignorance, and vice, and sin, which will inevitably come through the neglect of parents: nor can he easily protect such parents from the woe which will surely visit their neglect. Speaking to fathers and mothers, St. Augustine says: "As it is our duty to announce the Word of God to you in church, so in like manner it is your duty to announce it at home to your children and domestics." And St. Chrysostom says: "Be not deceived; it is your duty to instruct your children, and to kindle the fire of divine love in their hearts; your mouth and your lips are their books; you are their teachers and preachers, their ministers and apostles."

Oh! how God will bless the efforts of good parents, how He will pour down His graces upon themselves and upon their children; and how He will give to good parents to see their children surrounding them in bliss, and covered with glory, and majesty, and beauty, and splendor, in the magnificent halls of heaven!—"And every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

ON SCANDAL.

"Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh."—MATT. xviii. 7.

THE soul of man has been created by God, and made by Him unto His own image and likeness. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, loves souls. He gave His life-blood away as a purchase-money for them. No tongue can tell the length and breadth and depth of the love of Jesus for souls; His heart is a fire burning with love for the souls of men. He came down to cast fire upon the earth, and what wills He but that it be enkindled? Through love for souls He has sent the Paraclete, the Comforter, who came as a Tongue of Fire upon the Apostles. From all eternity, the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, have loved the souls of men, and they yearned with infinite yearning for them, and drew plans of infinite wisdom for their salvation, and prepared kingdoms and pleasures, and glories for them in heaven. But scandal robs God the Father of the souls which He has lovingly created, it robs Jesus Christ of the souls which He has purchased with His own Precious Blood, and it interferes with the work of the Holy Ghost—the salvation of souls.

By scandal is meant any word, action, or omission, bearing at least the appearance of evil, which may cause our neighbor to fall into sin. When you do or say something with the intention of leading another into sin, you commit *direct* scandal; when you do or say something, which you have reason to believe will be an occasion of sin to another, though you have no intention or desire to induce him to commit sin, you give *indirect* scandal. Grave scandal, whether direct or indirect, is a great sin, for it opposes the designs of God, destroys the beauty of God's image in the soul, keeps back the soul from heaven, and plunges it into hell! As an ambassador of Him who loves souls, and as a minister of Christ, I have an account to give, and hence my duty and real love of speaking on this important subject in plain and simple language, which, I hope, will have God's blessing going with it to your hearts. I am earnestly determined, by God's grace, to take every step to destroy scandals.

By scandal the devil gets done for him what he could not do himself; for if he were to appear visibly all would fly from him, so hideous is he and so abominable. Hence, in every town and city and county, and in every country of the world, the devil has his agents: men who give scandal to their neighbors, who do or say something, having at least the appearance of evil, which causes the neighbor to fall into sin. But upon all these God has pronounced His woe and His curse: "Woe to the man by whom scandal cometh; better for him that a mill-stone were hanged around his neck, and that he were thrown into the depths of the sea." The scandal-giver may be plausible, and apparently respectable, but in the eyes of God he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Scandal is committed in all classes and ranks of society, and it is committed in many and various ways. It is committed by words of double meaning, or by immodest language, by cursing, swearing, or blaspheming, or by bad example, especially in parents and others who should set a good example. Scandal is committed by drunkenness and by the sins which are caused by drunkenness, and which can neither be named nor numbered, so detestable and so innumerable are they. Oh! wasn't that a piercing cry which came from the scaffold a few weeks ago, when, as the victim of drink was being led to death for the murder of his wife, with clasped hands and on bended knees he thus expressed himself to the chaplain who attended him: "I have one request, sir, to make of you before I die, and it will be my last. When I am gone, write to the Temperance Association, and beg of them to carry on their good work, and may God bless them in it." Ah! my dear friends, how many "weaker brethren" are led into temptation and scandalized by seeing the drunken habits of their neighbor. How can they escape? How can any one expect the divine special protection for himself or his imitators, who without necessity, physical or moral, chooses to lead or to follow in the path of danger? Rising above the level of personal considerations to the higher ground of true Christian, fraternal love, we find it is expedient sometimes to abstain even from what is lawful: "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient" (1 Cor. vi. 12). St. Paul said that if the eating of flesh meat should prove to be a scandal to his weaker brother he would abstain from it altogether: "Wherefore," said he, "if meat scandalize my brother I will never eat meat, lest I should scandalize my brother" (1 Cor. viii. 13). And the same he said about "drink." Let the moderate drinker, then, as well as the habitual drunkard, take heed lest by any means this liberty of his should be so used as to encourage the weaker brethren to drink, and thus, perhaps, prove to be a stumbling-block and a scandal. Is your example a safe model for the weaker brethren? or would it be too much to forego your claims, and "deny" yourselves, rather than, perhaps, destroy by your unnecessary and dangerous drink, one of those souls for whom Christ suffered the parching "thirst" and died? "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more, but judge this rather: that you put not a stumbling-block or a scandal in your brother's way" (Rom. xiv. 13).

We should not endanger our brothers, for, are we not "our brothers' keepers"? Listen to the archbishops and bishops of Ireland, assembled in national council at Maynooth: "With deepest pain," said they, "and after the example of the Apostle weeping, we say that the abominable vice of intemperance still continues to work dreadful havoc among our people, marring in their souls the work of religion, and, in spite of their rare natural and supernatural virtues, changing many of them into 'enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame.' Is it not, dearly beloved, an intolerable scandal, that in the midst of a Catholic nation like ours, there should be found so many slaves of intemperance, who habitually sacrifice to brutal excess in drinking not only their reason, but their character, the honor of their children, their substance, their health, their life, their souls, and God Himself? . . . Against an evil so wide-spread and so pernicious, we implore all who have at heart the honor of God and the salvation of souls, to be filled with holy zeal. We warn parents and employers that they are bound to set in their own persons an example of temperance to those who are subject to them, and to watch lest through their own negligence those entrusted to their charge should fall victims to drink. . . . . We bless from our hearts those zealous ecclesiastics and others who, in accordance with the spirit of the Church, devote their time and energies to forwarding the cause of temperance." I may add, that the immortal Pontiff, Pius IX., has recently blessed the temperance movement, and every one who takes a part in forwarding it in any way.

Drink is the powerful engine employed by Satan in this age for wrecking homes, breaking family ties, making widows and orphans, filling 100,000 dishonored graves every year, peopling workhouses and asylums and prisons, forcing man into exile, and sending down into everlasting fire, I know not how many of those for whom Jesus died.

Scandal is committed by ridiculing piety and virtue in others. It is committed by tale-bearing, and disturbing neighbors who are at peace with one another. "The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all" (Ecclus. xxi. 31). Scandal is committed by him who wilfully and openly neglects to observe the rules of the Church. It is committed by showing contempt, stubbornness, ill-will, or disobedience to parents, or to superiors; it is committed by injurious words, and by refusing to ask pardon of those whom we have offended; it is committed by him who, through temporal motive, or through pride, or because he thinks he is made of better clay than other men, or through any other insufficient reason, neglects to receive the Blessed Eucharist at least once a year, and that in his own parish and from his own pastor.

Scandal is committed by writing, or by circulating bad papers, bad journals, bad books, or bad novels. Oh! how deplorable is the damage caused to faith and good morals in this age by bad books! Oh! how innocent souls are sickening and dying from the poisonous breath of the serpent which issues from the pages of bad books! Bad books have been justly classed amongst the four chief gates leading into hell; the other three are hatred, injustice, and impurity. A bad book is a false light, which blinds the intellect to the things of God. It is an enemy in disguise. It is an insidious serpent which, if admitted into your house, will surely kill. It is a golden cup full of abomination. A bad book is a bad companion, and a bad companion is one through whom "scandal cometh." Better for you to pluck out your right eye than to allow it to scandalize you by reading a bad book: better for you to cut off your right hand than to allow it to scandalize you by receiving with it a bad book, or lending, or selling, or circulating a bad book. "Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh; better for him that a mill-stone were hanged around his neck, and that he were thrown into the depths of the sea, than to scandalize one of the little ones for whom Christ died."

Scandal has one special characteristic feature which makes it frightful to contemplate. And that is, the ease with which it is committed, and yet the difficulty of making reparation. If you have unjustly taken your neighbor's property or possessions you may have some compensation to make, but if by scandal you precipitate an immortal soul into perdition, what compensation can you make? Verily, my brethren, no compensation can be made; for out of hell there is no redemption. If you scandalize one man you infect him, and he in his turn will infect all others with whom he comes in contact during life, and they, all others again, with whom they come in contact, and so on, and the responsibility of all will ultimately lie at your door! You will be held responsible for all the sins which will come through your sin of scandal.

The sin of scandal lives and breeds in the world long after the impenitent scandal-giver has gone down to hell. Does it not live in bad books, and bad pictures, and bad words, and bad example? Who can tell for how many generations our bad example may be handed down? Who, then, can tell all the sins of scandal, known and unknown, that shall be brought in judgment against us? Two young persons corrupt each other in early youth, they separate, and the wide world comes between them, and they meet again before the judgment-seat of God. Oh! how they will there accuse each other, and cry out for each other's condemnation! The blood of Abel, which was spilt upon the ground cried out to heaven for vengeance against Cain. Oh! how the soul of him that is scandalized will cry out as if in tones of thunder against him that scandalized it! And, perhaps, there is some one in hell at this moment crying out for vengeance on one of us that scandalized him, and sent him down to that dreadful abyss! Let him that is innocent thank God for it, and at the same time "let him take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

And now, seeing that scandal is a great sin; that it kills in our neighbor what is of more value than the body; that it is a common sin, and that it is easy to be committed, but difficult to be repaired; that it opposes God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that it interferes with the work of the Church for the salvation of souls; that it robs Jesus Christ of what, to our knowledge, He values more than His life, and that scandal brings down the "woe" pronounced upon the scandal-giver: let us conceive a horror for scandal, and let us make a firm resolution, never by God's grace, to commit scandal. If any of you have, unfortunately, scandalized your neighbor, and if you feel that you have robbed Jesus Christ of one or more of those souls which He purchased for Himself on the cross, yet despair not; even for the scandal-giver there is pardon, if he sincerely repents and goes to Confession. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I desire not the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked be converted from his way and live" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). God's mercy is above all His other works. He has invested His priests with His own Royal powers of forgiving all sin: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven" (John xx. 28). "He has come to call not the just but sinners to repentance" (Luke v. 32). There is no one more welcome to Confession than the sinner. Come, then, be not afraid or ashamed; kindness awaits you evermore at the tribunal of Confession!—"Though your sins were as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow" (Is. i. 18). The Precious Blood, that is able to wash away all sin, is still flowing for you in the Sacrament of Penance. Come to it then, Jesus lovingly invites you, and wash your souls in its bright red Baptism. It will wash away every stain of sin from you. It will make you clean and white, and innocent once more, such as you lay, after Baptism, on your mother's arm, when the angels of God looked upon you and loved you, and prophesied good things and great things about you, and wished for the day of your admission into heaven, there to see the things of surpassing beauty and loveliness, there to hear the voice of Mary, sweet as the key-note of heaven's music, "there to possess the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world" (Matt. xx. 34); there to enjoy the Beatific Vision—the Face of God—for ever and ever. Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

"And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David!"—LUKE ii.

IMMEDIATELY after the fall of our first parents God, in His infinite mercy, promised a Redeemer, by whose merits man should be saved from sin and the eternal punishments due to it, and also restored to his primitive right to the kingdom of heaven. But this promise God chose not to fulfil for 4,000 years. This He did in order that all mankind might become more sensible of their misery, and that they might more ardently desire the coming of the Redeemer. Those years were felt slow, and dreary, and dismal, and even dreadful by reason of the Deluge, which well-nigh swept away the whole human race; and, again, by reason of the lurid fire which fell upon the sinful cities of the Plain, and instantly burned all their inhabitants! During those years many a sigh and prayer was offered up for the coming of the Messias. The ancient patriarchs and prophets prayed that the heavens would open and let down the Just One, and that the earth would open and bud forth the Saviour. In the words of Isaias they prayed: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour; and let Justice spring up together" (Is. xlv.).

But at length the "plenitude of time" had come, the seventy weeks of years foretold by the Prophet Daniel had elapsed, the royal sceptre had passed away from the House of Judah, and "tidings of great joy were brought to all the people," the heavens opened and flowed with honey, the long-expected Messias came, and He was born as an infant in the stable of Bethlehem! "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David!"

The Gospel tells us the circumstances of our Saviour's birth. Cæsar Augustus was at the time Emperor of Rome and all the provinces, including Judea. He was a proud man, and, like David, he wished to number his people. And, so, he commanded that all his subjects should go to be enrolled, each into his own city. And in obedience to this decree, Joseph and Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child, set out from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The distance was ninety miles. They walked all the way on foot, and when they reached Bethlehem no one would give them lodging. "There was no room for them." They tried everywhere about the village, but all in vain, till at length they met with an old stable in which there was an ox and an ass. And into this stable Mary and Joseph went for shelter from the cold of the night.

And it came to pass that when they were there Mary's days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and at midnight she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt Him in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger. And this child was Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Thus on Christmas night, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine years ago, the long-expected Messias, the Redeemer of us all, was born. And forthwith the heavens burst forth with joyous strain, and the angels sang with loud celestial voices: "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will!"

And there were shepherds out on the snowy hills of Judea that night watching their flocks. "And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David!"

And the shepherds went over with haste to Bethlehem, and there they found Mary and Joseph, with the Infant Saviour wrapt in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger! Oh! who can tell the feelings of those humble shepherds as they looked and gazed upon the new-born Babe? How His little cry thrilled through their ears, and touched their hearts to tenderest emotion! How overjoyed they must have felt as they thought that He at last had come who was to release them from the slavery of sin and the torments of hell, and who was to make them partakers of the joys and glories of heaven! Oh, what deep feelings of homage and confidence, and gratitude and love they must have felt on that occasion! How their souls were rapt with astonishment at actually seeing "*the Word made Flesh!*" the immense God of heaven narrowed within the compass of a little Babe! Indeed, well might they have exclaimed: "Oh! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!" (Rom. ii. 33).

But observe the striking features in the circumstances of His birth. He is born in the depth of winter, in the middle of the night, in a cold, comfortless stable, and He appears first of all (if we except His Mother and St. Joseph) to humble, poor shepherds. Did these circumstances happen by mere chance, or was there a meaning in them? Why is He not born in some one of the gorgeous palaces of the earth, in the midst of riches and comforts? Why did our Lord select a stable as the place of His birth? It was in order to confound the pride of the world. It was in order to cure the haughty and the proud-hearted. It was in order to reduce the honors and distinctions of this world to nought. It was in order to lessen the boasting of the high-born, and to make humility appear at once honorable and beautiful, by leading the way in His own Royal Person. "Learn of me," He says in His first lesson, "to be meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). He was born in poverty, in order to teach us detachment from the things of the world. He honored poor shepherds with His first interview, and He said for the comfort of the humble poor, and of the rich also who are poor in spirit: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" (Matt. v. 3).

Let us ask of Jesus to-day to give us grace to learn the great lesson which He has come to teach, to be "meek and humble of heart." Let us ask of Him to-day, as a birthday present, the grace whereby we may carry on vigorously the great work of our salvation which He has so lovingly begun, that we may renounce all pride, and vanity, and self-seeking, that we may seek Him who through His ministers forgives the sinner in the tribunal of Confession, that we may adore and worthily receive Him who resides in the Blessed Sacrament, who was born as a sweet little Babe at Bethlehem, and whose birth is celebrated with universal joy throughout all Christendom to-day. "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David!"

CORPUS CHRISTI.

"And the Bread which I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world."—John vi. 52.

THIS day has been set apart by the Catholic Church as a special day for celebrating the venerable and sublime mystery of the Blessed Eucharist. It is called the Feast of *Corpus Christi*, which two Latin words mean the *Body of Christ*, for Christ's Body is present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. When the Church was celebrating the institution of this Sacrament on Holy Thursday, she was plunged at the time in deep sorrow for the sufferings of our Redeemer, and so could then give only a passing smile through her tears of sorrow; but on this day she exults and rejoices with her whole heart. She calls all her children to unite with her in celebrating the great feast with all befitting pomp, and splendor, and magnificence. Hence throughout the whole Catholic world to-day there is joy in every heart and joy upon every tongue. The bells are everywhere ringing for joy, the organs are pealing gladness, the altars are decorated with rich ornaments and fair flowers, and are lighted up with brilliant lights. Odoriferous incense waves within the sanctuary and ascends, like prayer, up to the Most High. The ministers of God are vested in the costliest robes, and with grateful hearts and reverent hands carry in triumphal procession the Lord of Hosts, who from under the white veil around Him looks upon all the scene, and graciously blesses His people as He passes.

The faithful in the majesty of their numbers surround the altar to-day; their respectful and becoming demeanor in church speaks in silent yet eloquent language of the faith which is in them: they believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. This was the faith of our Celtic forefathers; they received it as a gift from God, through St. Patrick, 1,400 years ago, and they have lovingly clung to it ever since; through weal and through woe they have clung to it; they have loved it with a love even greater than their intense love of nationality. Irish kings with an enlightened love have fought for it, and Irish men and women have nobly laid down their lives in the defense of it. Thus has it been triumphantly preserved from generation to generation, down to our day. And indeed it is well worth preserving, for it is the true faith taught by the universal Church of Christ from the very beginning, and resting upon God's own infallible words: "*The Bread which I will give is my Flesh*" (John vi. 52). "*This is my Body*" (Matt. xxvi. 26).

It was at His Last Supper that Jesus appeared under the form of bread for the first time. "Knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world and go to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John xiii. 1). Love for His Father called Him to heaven, love for man invited Him to remain. And so, by a mystery transcending all finite intelligence and power, He satisfied His love for both. Wherefore, He took bread into His sacred and venerable hands, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to His Apostles, saying: "Take ye and eat: *This is my Body*" (Matt. xxvi.). "If any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever: and the Bread that I will give, is my Flesh for the life of the world. . . . . He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 52, 55).

You perceive that under the form of bread Jesus gave Himself to the Apostles on that occasion. For He said to them: "*Take ye and eat: This is my Body!*" Nor let any one say with the unbelievers: "How can this man give us his Flesh to eat? Is not such a thing impossible?" Now, is it right, or even reasonable, for any human being who has only a *finite* intelligence to put limits to the *Infinite?* Are not all things possible with God, no matter whether we understand them or not? He can make the lilies grow though we do not understand how He does it; and if this in the natural order, what can He not do in the supernatural? It is the duty, then, of every Christian to submit his reason to the words of God, and to say humbly, like St. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go; Thou hast the words of eternal life?" (John vi. 69). Thou hast said that the Blessed Eucharist, which to our senses appears to be bread and wine, is Thy Body and Blood; we bow down and believe that it is. There is no man more intelligent than he who rises above the earth and believes in the Unseen. This is the glory of our faith, and its merit that we believe though we do not see nor understand. "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed!" (John xx. 26).

When, then, the bread and wine are changed into the Blessed Eucharist, the whole substance of the bread is changed into the Body of Christ, and the whole substance of the wine into His Blood. This change is called *Transubstantiation*. And though no part, or even atom, of the substance of the bread or of the wine remains, yet the appearances of both are permitted purposely to remain in order to veil the dazzling splendors of the Divinity, which none but the Blessed can see and live.

God, by His great Omnipotence, directed by wisdom and love, changes those substances as easily as He changed the waters of Cana into wine, or the waters of Egypt into blood, or the dead rod of Aaron into the living flesh and blood of a serpent. But perhaps some one may say that in those instances every one could perceive a change, but in the Blessed Eucharist no one can see any change. Before what is called Transubstantiation our senses testified to bread and wine, and they testified to the same after. Are we, then, to believe our senses, or do they deceive us? Well, in answer to this plausible objection, which is a fair sample of the many objections raised by man against God, I need only say that our senses do not deceive us; for they can never testify to the substance of things: the most they can do is to testify to appearances. Had we been present when the Holy Ghost visibly descended upon the Apostles, at Whitsuntide, our senses would have testified to *parted tongues of fire;* and had we been present again when the same Holy Ghost descended upon our Saviour in the waters of the Jordan, our senses would have testified to *a dove;* yet faith assures us that in neither case was it a *parted tongue of fire* that was present, or a *dove*, but the self-same Holy Ghost. Nor would our senses have deceived us, for those appearances were really present, and with the substance underlying, our senses had nothing whatsoever to do. And as in the case of the Holy Ghost, so also in the case of Jesus Christ under His own selected appearances in the Blessed Eucharist. Our senses do not, therefore, deceive us; for, whilst they testify nothing about the substance, they testify correctly to the appearances.

Jesus Christ, then, at His Last Supper, changed bread and wine into his Body and Blood. And, forthwith, He gave his Apostles then present, and to their lawful successors, that is the priests of the Catholic Church for all time, the *power* to do the same; and not only the power, but also the command to do the same: "*Do this,*" said He, "*in commemoration of me*" (Luke xxii. 19). This power, no less than the vow of chastity, and the sweet power of forgiving sin, constitutes part of the mysterious attractiveness of the priesthood. Thus is Christ the invisible High Priest, continuated visibly in His priests upon earth; they have always, and shall always, exercise this power given them. Such is the belief which has been held by the faithful in all ages. In the sixth session of the Second Council of Nice the Fathers assembled said these expressive and infallible words: "Neither Christ, nor the Apostles, nor the Fathers, ever said that the unbloody sacrifice which is offered by the priest was an image, but His very Body and His very Blood; for this was not what the Apostles learned from Him. He did not say to them, 'Take and eat the Image of my Body,' but, 'Take and eat, *this is my Body.*' It is true the Fathers called the gifts *autitypes*, but after sanctification they are properly called *the Body and Blood of Christ.*" Again, in the Fourth General Council of

Lateran, it was decreed that, "The universal Church of the faithful is one, outside of which no one is saved; in which Jesus Christ Himself is the (invisible) Priest and Sacrifice, whose *Body and Blood, under the appearances of bread and wine, are truly contained in the Sacrament of the altar,* the bread being transubstantiated into the Body, and the wine into the Blood."

St. Augustine, comparing the hands of the priest to the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin, exclaims: "Oh, venerable dignity of priests, in whose hands the Son of God is continually incarnated!" And St. Chrysostom sublimely adds: "When the priest is celebrating Holy Mass the skies open, and thousands and tens of thousands of angels come down from heaven to assist at the Divine Sacrifice!"

Passages innumerable might be adduced from the writings of the early Fathers, from the councils of the Church, and from the sacred Scriptures; and all these, united with the great voice of universal tradition, speak trumpet-tongued in all ages and through all lands of the Real Presence of Him who said in His own true words and clear: "*This is my Body,*" . . . . "*The Bread that I give is my Flesh!*"

Behold the mystery by which Jesus has satisfied His twofold love! He has satisfied His love for His Father by ascending into heaven, and His love for man by remaining on earth in the Blessed Eucharist! "O love not loved! O love not known!" O ye heavens, be astonished at God's incomprehensible love for man! O earth, rejoice and be glad, for great is He who is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel!

Jesus, then, remains forevermore in the Blessed Eucharist; He remains to be the food and nourishment of our souls. He invites all to come and receive Him: "Come to me," He says in His own loving way, "come to me all you that labor, and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28). "Take ye and eat" (1 Cor. xi. 24). "If any man eat of this Bread he shall live forever." "And the Bread that I give is my Flesh for the life of the world" (John vi.). Through His love He desires to be united with us, for union is the property of love. He desires to give us Himself and all that He has: His Divinity, and Soul, and Body, and Blood, even the very blood which He received in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Hence He justly resents His love being slighted by us. He even commands us, under pain of eternal death, to approach and receive Him. "Except," He says, "you eat the Flesh of the Son of man and drink His Blood, *you shall not have life in you*" (John vi. 54). It is no less certain death, then, to stay away from this Divine Sacrament than it is to receive it unworthily! Let us resolve, therefore, to correspond with the loving invitation of our dear Lord, by going to receive Him in Holy Communion frequently and always worthily. St. Liguori, the doctor of the Universal Church, strongly recommends all the faithful to go to Holy Communion at least once a month. The Council of Trent recommends frequent Communion. "For the Blessed Eucharist," it says, "is a powerful antidote to deliver us from our daily faults, and to preserve us from mortal sin. Oh! how our forefathers loved to receive the Blessed Eucharist often. Even in the days of dread persecution, when a price was set upon the head of a priest, and it was a crime to be a Catholic, even then the Irish priest laid aside his priestly dress and faithfully remained in disguise with his people, laboring with them as an ordinary man, and when Sunday came both priest and people stole away to some distant lonely glen, and there was offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the people received from their *Soggarth Aroon*, often in the year, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Resolve, I beseech of you, to receive the Blessed Eucharist *often*. Show forth to the world that you have the high degree of refined intelligence whereby to appreciate as you ought the great gift of God. Value a single Holy Communion far above all silver and gold, and worldly honors, and even "the world itself." What can you ever receive from the hands of man equal to the Blessed Eucharist? Resolve also to receive the Blessed Eucharist always *worthily*. "For, whosoever receives unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and eats judgment, that is, damnation to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 29). Secure this condition by making a good Confession before Holy Communion. Nor let any one be afraid or ashamed to draw near to the tribunal of Penance; for, strange to say, whilst the convicted culprit is condemned at all other tribunals, he is only acquitted at the tribunal of Penance. The priest hearing Confessions holds the place of Jesus Christ; his heart is modelled on the merciful Heart of Him who forgave Peter, and Magdalen, and the Penitent Thief. Oh! would that I could describe to you how the heart of a confessor melts with tenderness and joy when he absolves the sinner, and says to him: "*Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee!*" Oh, how I pity the man who remains in sin whilst there is such a means of forgiveness! Oh, how I could hang upon his neck and weep! No matter how enormous your sins may be, if you confess them with sorrow they shall be all forgiven. "If your sins be as scarlet they shall be made white as snow!" (Is. i. 18). "Whose soever sins," says Christ to His priests, "you shall retain, they are retained; but *whose soever sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven!*" "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained!" (John xx. 23).

Thus by a good Confession you will secure to yourselves a state of grace; and in this state approach confidently, with a lively faith and an ardent love, to receive Him who is the "Living Bread which came down from heaven, whereof if any man eat he shall live forever!" Jesus will *abide* with you and transform you into Himself. He will be united with you, so that you shall be two in one. "This union," says St. Chrysostom, "is the same as if two species of wax were melted into each other." Through this union He will produce in you great and wonderful effects: He will strengthen you against temptations, He will fill you with every grace, for He is the Author, and the Source, and the fountain itself of all grace, He will support you on your journey to heaven. The bread which the angel ordered the Prophet Elias to eat in the desert sustained him on his journey to the mountain of Horeb; the blood of the Paschal Lamb, sprinkled on the doorposts, protected the Israelites from the destroying angel; Zaccheus, the Publican, was promised salvation for lodging the Saviour under his roof; a woman afflicted with a certain disease for many years was immediately cured by touching the hem of the Saviour's garment. What, then, must be the effect of the Blessed Eucharist in the soul? Oh! how eloquently does Jesus Himself express it: "If any man," He says, "eat of this Bread, he shall live forever: and the Bread that I will give, is my Flesh for the life of the world. . . . . He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 52, 55).

O Jesus! I adore Thee present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. Thy Holy Presence amongst us here, my Lord and my God, is cause for the liveliest rapture. Thou dost remain with us to be visited, and Thou dost invite us all to visit Thee; and who, O Lord, is so worthy of a visit from us, or indeed of all our visits, as Thou art? Whose society can we be in so honorable, or so profitable, or so sweet as Thine? Thou art the Friend of the friendless, the Father of the fatherless, the Consoler of the afflicted, the source from which every good that we can expect is to come. Thou art the most amiable of all, and Thou art only too happy to receive all who come to visit Thee. Thou dost send no one away empty. "Come to me," Thou sayest, "all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you!"

O Jesus, grant that we may know how to love thee! Grant that we may know how to show forth to the world our love of Thee, that we may win all hearts to love Thee during life; so that at death God may welcome us all to His happy home, and press us to His Sacred Heart, and put aside the white veil of the Host, and show us His sweet face, which for all eternity is to be "a Thing of Beauty!" "If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever: and the Bread that I give, is my Flesh for the life of the world. . . . . He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 52, 55).

ON LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one fot another."—JOHN xiii. 35.

LOVE for his neighbor is the characteristic of a true Christian: "By this," says Christ, "shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John xiii. 35). The heathens knew all the early Christians by this mark: "See those Christians," they said, "*how they love one another!*" They seemed to have but one heart and one soul. Christ Himself took special care to inculcate this lesson of love upon all His followers: "This is my Commandment," He said, "that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 39). "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you" (Luke vi. 27, 28). St. John was never satisfied but when he was preaching on fraternal love; even in his old age, when he was no longer able to entertain his audience with a longer discourse, he would content himself with this brief exhortation: "My brethren, love one another." And, when a friend asked him why he repeated this sermon so often, he replied, says St. Jerome, "Love of our neighbor is the command of the Lord, and the observance of it alone suffices for life everlasting." And St. Paul says: "All the law is fulfilled in one word: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'" (Gal. v. 13).

No one can love God without loving his neighbor. St. John writes: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he who loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" (John iv. 20). And again: "He that loveth not, abideth in death" (1 John iii. 14). St. Augustine adds, that such a person is dead, not only because he is stricken with the wound of a grievous sin, but because the root of every sin is planted in his soul. Without love of the neighbor, neither prayer, nor alms, nor sacraments, nor sacrifice is of any avail before God. God distinctly says: "If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offerings before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift"

(Matt. v. 23, 24). Though you should distribute all your goods to feed the poor, though you should deliver your body to be burned, and have not love for your neighbor, it will all profit you nothing. Love, then, is the fulfilment of the law. "Love," says St. Ambrose, "is the root of every good deed."

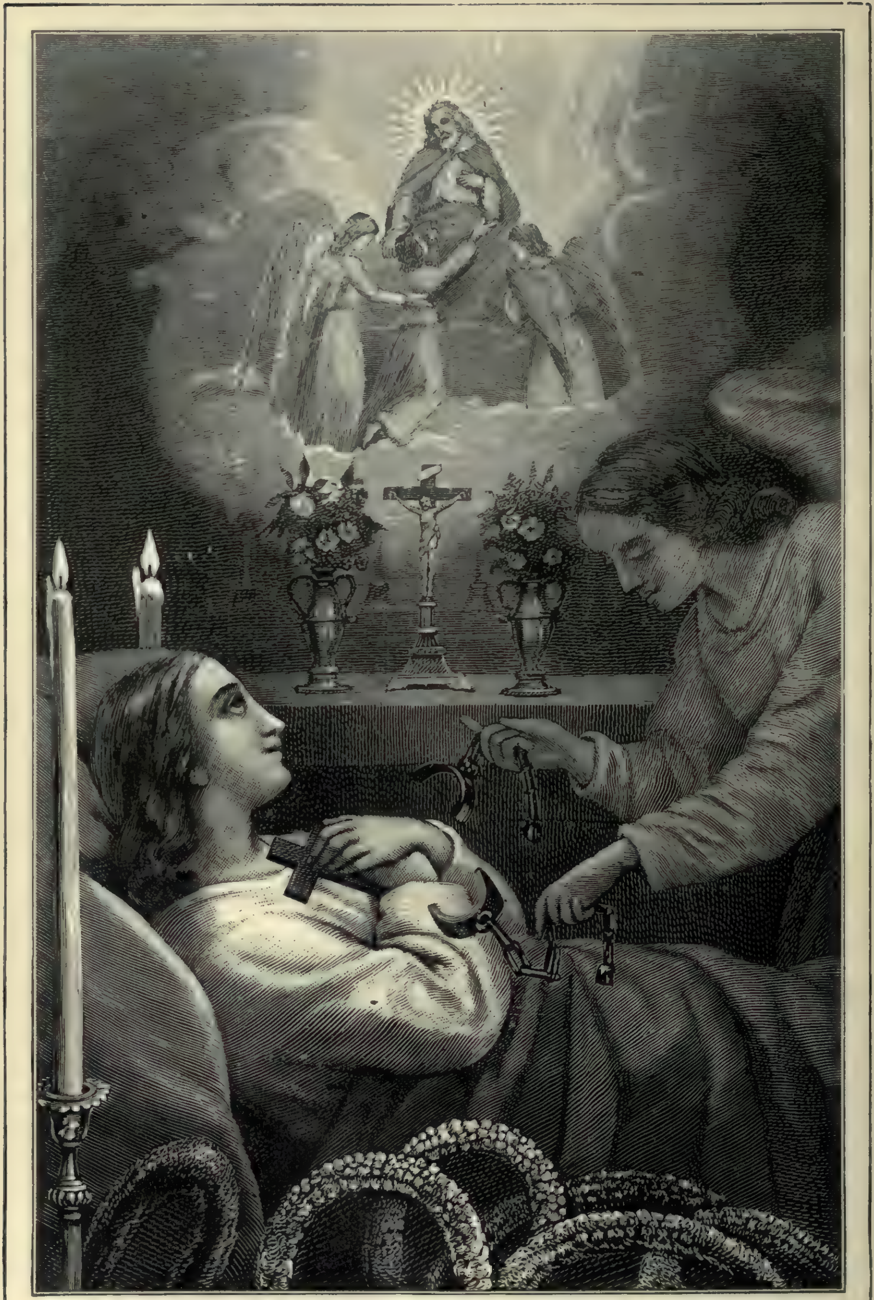
Now, what is the standard of true fraternal love? What should be the model of true love? St. Paul says, that the love of our neighbor should be modelled upon the love and union that exists between the members of the human body. "The body is one, and hath many members. . . . . So also is Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12). As all the members of the body mutually help and assist each other, so should all the members of the human race mutually help and assist each other. We should then relieve the distressed, we should console the afflicted, we should pray for the wicked; in a word, we should take care of our neighbor. God has committed to each of us the care of his neighbor. We should take care of our neighbor's soul as well as of his body. St. Bernard, on this subject, says: "The ass falls and is soon raised up again; a soul perishes and no one attends to it."

Again, the love of our neighbor should be modelled upon the love that we have for ourselves. Every man loves himself with a true and sincere love: a love that is tender, constant, and active; and it is a love like this that we should have for our neighbor. We should never injure our neighbor in his person, property, or character; we should wish well to him, and speak kindly of him; we should pray for him, and always assist him as far as we are able in his spiritual and corporal necessities. We should do to our neighbor as we would wish he should do to us. As "you would," says Christ, "that men should do to you, do you also to them" (Matt. vii. 12). We should take care to love our neighbor, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Finally, our love for our neighbor should be modelled upon the love that Christ has for us. Christ has given His life for us. "In this we have known the charity of God, because He has given His life for us; and we ought also to give our life for our brethren" (1 John iii. 16). Christ has loved us in God and for God; therefore, we should love our neighbor in God and for God. The love of our neighbor must come through our love of God; it must grow out of it, as a tree from its root.

Our love, like Christ's, must extend to all men, good and bad; there is no exception to be made, even of those who differ from us in religion, or those who inflict injuries upon us. We must love those who injure us as well as those who benefit us; "For," says Christ, "if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have; do not even the publicans this?" (Matt. v. 46). God wishes that we love our enemies as well as our friends. "Love your enemies," says Christ; "do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (Matt. v. 44). If your neighbor has injured and insulted you, remember he has to the same extent, and infinitely more, insulted God; yet God loves him; why, then, should you not love him too? God's sun shines upon the just and the unjust; God's refreshing rains fall upon the innocent and the guilty: God's love, therefore, extends even to your enemy. Is it too much to expect that you should love him whom God thus loves? Ah, my brethren, I fear we are sadly wanting in real love for our neighbor! I fear we are too ready at detracting, and backbiting, and calumniating our neighbor. St. Augustine could not bear the sight of a detractor. He had always hung up on the walls of his dining-room the remarkable inscription: "*No detractors are allowed at this table!*" The Sacred Scriptures condemn the tale-bearer in the strongest language. "The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all: and he that shall abide with him shall be hateful: the silent and wise man shall be honored" (Ecclus. xxi. 31). "The detractor is the abomination of men!" (Prov. xxiv. 9). St. Liguori boldly says that, "He who speaks uncharitably of his neighbor has the devil in his mouth, and he who listens to him has the devil in his ear!"

Let us, then, love our neighbor with a true and sincere love. Let us love him with the love which we should have for one who has been made to the image and likeness of God, and redeemed with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Let us love him as we should love one who has been created, like ourselves, to enjoy God for all eternity in heaven!



My Exile is Finished.

ON DEATH.

"It is appointed unto men once to die!"—HEB. ix. 27.

THE frequent and serious consideration of death is well calculated to produce the most salutary effects in the soul. Hence, every wise man thinks frequently over his death. The very Pagans made death the subject of their frequent reflection: they even preserved the ashes of their departed friends in order to remind them of this great truth. The Roman victors in their triumphal march were reminded of death by heralds who proclaimed aloud: "REMEMBER THAT THOU ART TO DIE!" The Grecian Emperors at their coronation were emphatically reminded that they were to die; the Egyptians at their public feasts had striking emblems of death placed before them; and all this both Romans and Grecians and Egyptians did in order that they should never lose sight of death. At the coronation of every new Pope it is still usual to burn flax or stubble to remind him that he is but mortal. And the Church on Ash-Wednesday reminds her children of death by placing ashes upon their foreheads, and addressing them in the solemn words pronounced by Almighty God upon our first parents after their fall: "Remember, man, 'thou art but dust, and into dust thou shalt return!'" (Gen. iii. 19).

"It is appointed unto men once to die!" The irrevocable sentence of "*Death*" has been already pronounced by God against all men, old and young, rich and poor, just and unjust, learned and unlearned. There is no one that doubts he shall die; thus death is certain. As all the great heroes of antiquity, and the mighty men of old, kings and warriors and renowned statesmen, have died, so, too, shall their successors die. As all the generations in the past have died, so shall we too. In a few years hence, perhaps in a much shorter time, we shall die; our bodies shall become pale and stiff, and even loathsome; they shall be wrapped in a shroud, inclosed in a coffin, and carried away to be buried in the earth, there to be eaten up by worms, and to moulder away into dust. For it is written: "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return!" (Gen. iii. 19).

No man can resist the stroke of death. St. Augustine, writing on the twelfth Psalm, says: "Fires, waters, and the sword are resisted; kings are resisted; death comes; who resists *it?*" We cannot put off our death even for one moment. An hour shall strike, and beyond that moment we cannot extend our life. "The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with Thee: Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed" (Job xiv. 5). These "bounds" are narrow indeed; "For what is your life? It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while" (James iv. 15). "My days," says Job, ix. 25, "have been swifter than a post!" And again, "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed!" (Job xiv. 2). "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flowers of the field" (Is. xl. 6).

Everything in this world helps to remind us of death: the pictures of our deceased friends, their books, and clothes, and furniture; the houses which they built, the farms which they purchased, the beads upon which they said their prayers, the bench in the church on which they knelt on the Sundays long ago. Are we not reminded of death, too, when we see the leaves fall off from the trees in autumn, when we see the grass and plants and flowers wither and decay? Do not the deaths of our neighbors and friends around us perpetually remind us that we, too, must die? The clouds that come and go in the sky remind us of death; the waters that come from the sea and return again remind us of death. The woman of Thecua correctly remarked to David: "We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth!" (2 Kings xiv. 14). Every breath that we draw reminds us of our last breath, every step that we take reminds us of our last step, which shall be into the grave! "It is appointed unto men once to die!" Thus death is most certain.

Death is also uncertain. It is uncertain as to time, and place, and circumstances. No one can tell when he is to die, nor where, nor how: whether he is to die this year, or next, or how soon; whether he shall die on the road, or in the field, or in the house; whether he shall die after a lingering illness and fortified with the rites of the Church, or die on a sudden. We know not whether at death we shall be ushered into the presence of God in a state of grace, or in a state of mortal sin. God has purposely concealed all things from us in order that we may lead good lives and be always prepared for death. "Of death," says St. Gregory, "we are uncertain, that we may be found always prepared for death!" Jesus Christ Himself, anxious for our salvation, reminds us of the uncertainty of death. "Be you then also ready," He says, "for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come!" (Luke xii. 40). And again: "Watch ye, therefore, because ye know not what hour your Lord will come; but this know ye, that if the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, and would not suffer the house to be broken open. Wherefore, be you also ready, because at what hour you know not the Son of Man will come!" (Matt. xxiv. 42). It is then but reasonable and wise to expect death at every time and at every place. "Death," says St. Bernard, "waits for thee everywhere; do thou everywhere wait for it."

The moment of death will decide our fate for all eternity. As the tree falls so shall it lie! "If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it lie!" (Eccles. xi. 3). If we die well we shall be happy for all eternity, but if we die in mortal sin we shall be forever miserable. And the loss will be our own.

Death is, as it were, the echo of life; at death all the good and bad deeds of our whole life shall come out for judgment. God will judge all the thoughts, and words, and actions, and omissions of our life. He will require an exact account of our stewardship: how we have used the talents, and graces, and the worldly goods which He gave us! how we have used the faculties of our soul, and the powers of our body; for our body, and our soul, and our worldly goods are all God's property, given to us in trust, and are therefore to be accounted for. And woe to the man who neglects to use all his faculties and powers in the service of God! The man in the Gospel who buried his talent was cast into exterior darkness; the "tree," also, that produced no fruit was ordered to be cut down and cast into the fire!

To the man whose heart is set upon the riches and honors of this world death appears terrible. On whatever side he looks, he finds only torture; his innumerable sins stare him in the face; when he was committing these sins he thought little of them, but now they are like swords which pierce the soul with terror. The dying sinner remembers the graces resisted and abused, the sacraments neglected, or, what is worse, received sacrilegiously; his bad deeds outweigh his few good ones; his heart trembles within him, and he exclaims: "The sorrows of death have compassed me, and the perils of hell have found me!" (Ps. xciv. 3). As fishes are allured by the bait, so are sinners captured by Satan. "As fishes are taken by the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time!" (Eccl. ix. 12). That is, they die whilst they are actually offending God. Nor is there much comfort for the sinner who, during life, puts off his conversion from day to day, and in the end spends only his few last days in preparing himself for death. St. Liguori says: "And I assert, that all who ordinarily neglect to unburthen their conscience, die without preparation, even though they should have seven or eight days to prepare for a *good death;* for it is very difficult during these days of confusion and terror to settle accounts with God and to return to Him with sincerity. But I repeat, that death may come upon you in such a manner, that you shall not have time even to receive the sacraments." "A hard heart," says Ecclus. (iii. 27), "shall fare evil at the last, and he that loveth the danger shall perish in it!"

The just man, on the other hand, feels no terror at the approach of death; for him death has no sting, nor torment. "The souls of the just," says the Scripture, "are in the hands of God, and the torments of death shall not touch them!" (Wisd. iii. 1). The just man looks upon death as a golden gate leading from this vale of misery into the land of eternal happiness. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. cxv. 15). "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors!" (Apoc. xiv. 13). Death delivers the just man from his sufferings in this life, from temptations and actual sins, and from the danger of falling into hell; death is, therefore, welcomed by the just man.

The sincere penitent rejoices at the approach of death; for though he may have committed many and grievous sins during his life, yet he knows that he has by God's mercy received pardon for them in the tribunal of penance. He knows that though his sins were as red as scarlet they are at that tribunal *made whiter than snow!* And, moreover, the true penitent has performed good works, and he knows that these good works follow him. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them!" (Apoc. xiv. 13). The just man is filled with sweet comfort when the Viaticum is brought to him at the hour of death, and he rejoices at the thought of soon tasting of the ineffable pleasure of seeing the entrancing beauty of the face of God!

Let us, then, live well in order that we may die well, and escape the dangers which beset the death of the sinner. "Oh, my dearly beloved, from how great a danger mayest thou deliver thyself, from how great a fear mayest thou be freed, if thou wilt but now be always fearful and looking for death! Strive now so to live, that in the hour of thy death thou mayest rather rejoice than fear! Learn now to die to the world, that then thou mayest begin to live with Christ! Learn now to despise all things, that then thou mayest freely go to Christ! Chastise thy body now by penance, that thou mayest then have an assured confidence!" ("Imit. of Christ," B. I., ch. xxiii.)

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

"Let us therefore, cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light!'
—Rom. xiii. 12.

THE Church, my brethren, commences her ecclesiastical year on this day, the First Sunday of Advent: and her first concern is to prepare with due care for the great approaching festival of Christmas. She sets apart a certain time for this purpose, and calls it Advent, or the coming of the Lord. She earnestly desires to have all her children prepare themselves well during this time, so that Christ Jesus may be spiritually born in their souls at Christmas, and that they may receive that "peace" which is promised to "men of good will." "Prepare," she says to her children, "prepare ye the ways of the Lord, make straight His paths!" (Luke iii. 4). "Know ye that it is now the hour to arise from the sleep *of sin*. . . . . Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xiii. 11). "Let him that is just become more and more just, and him that is holy become more and more holy." "Cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light" (Rom. xiii. 12).

And, my brethren, lest her gentle admonitions should prove insufficient to move obstinate sinners to give up their evil ways, and to prepare as they ought by a true conversion, she thoughtfully and deliberately lays before them to-day the dreadful picture of the General Judgment. By this she wishes to inspire them with a salutary fear unto the desired wisdom; for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

And, indeed, the General Judgment is sufficient to strike fear and terror into every one who believes that he shall have to stand before the Judgment-seat of God on that day, and there receive, in the presence of the whole human race, his eternal sentence of either "heaven," or "hell." The thought of it is sufficient to fill the most hardened sinners with withering fear. "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves. Men withering away from fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world" (Luke xxi. 25, 26).

But, my brethren, if these signs which shall precede the General Judgment be so alarming as to cause men "to wither away for fear," what must the effect caused by the Judgment itself be? "Oh, terrible hour!" exclaims St. Ephraim; "who shall relate, or who shall bear to hear this last and fearful rehearsal?" "What shall I do," says holy Job, "when God shall rise to judge, and when He shall ask and examine, what shall I answer Him? . . . . I know that if man will contend with God, he cannot answer Him one good thought, or word, or deed, for a thousand (bad ones)" (Job ix.).

On the Day of Judgment the last trumpet shall sound: "*Arise ye, dead, and come to Judgment!*" Each note shall sound louder than thunder. It shall reverberate through all the graves of the dead. And in a moment, "*in the twinkling of an eye*," the land and sea shall yield up the corpses which they contain, and heaven, and purgatory, and hell will give up the souls which they possess, in order to be reunited respectively to the same bodies which they had in this life. Oh! joyful reunion of the souls and bodies of the just. But, alas! sad reunion of the reprobate souls with the hideous bodies which during life had been their companions in guilt! And all mankind shall stand together in the Valley of Josaphat to be judged!

"And, behold, the sign of the Cross shall appear, and the Son of Man shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty, and all the angels with Him." His Five Wounds, suffered for the Redemption of the human race, shall shine like five brilliant suns, and shall strike the reprobate with terror and dismay, but the just they shall sweetly comfort and gladden. The just shall be caught up in ecstasy, as it were, in the air to meet the Judge, but the wicked who crucified the Son of Man by their sins, and did not repent, "shall wither away for fear." They shall call upon the mountains to fall upon them, and the rocks to hide them from the face of the angry Judge.

"The Judgment sat, and the books were opened!" (Dan. vii. 10). The guilty are on their trial; they have no advocate to plead in their behalf. The Judge is inexorable: He will make no distinction of persons; He will judge with the strictest justice; the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light. Jerusalem shall be searched with lamps, the abominations which are now hidden shall then be exposed to the view of the whole human race; parents shall look on, and friends and enemies. "The unfortunate sinner shall see," as St. Augustine says, "all his sins ranged before him in exact order, day, and date, and circumstances will be given!"

All our thoughts, and words, and deeds, and sinful desires shall unfailingly start up for judgment; sins of hatred, and detraction, and revenge, and jealousy; sins of drunkenness and impurity, sins of injustice and injury to our neighbor, sins of scandal and bad example, and wilful abuse of graces; all these sins, and all others shall be publicly exposed, and scrutinized, and judged. Who is there, my brethren, with life so innocent, or soul so pure, as to escape on that searching day? "If the just man," says St. Peter, "shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter iv. 18).

We shall be weighed to a nicety in the scales of the sanctuary, and our good works shall be put into one scale and our evil deeds into the other. The mere name of being "Christian," or "Catholic," will be of no avail unless you have good works to correspond. Nay, it will only add to the condemnation: Sodom and Gomorrah, that had the fire and brimstone rained upon them for their sins, shall be treated more favorably; Tyre and Sidon will find it more tolerable than the negligent Catholic.

Christ will say to the wicked: "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels!" (Matt. xxi. 41). Each word will fall like a thunderbolt upon the unfortunate reprobate, and he shall sink under it down into the gloomy abyss of unquenchable fire! Nor shall the echo of his sentence soon die away, but it shall repeat itself, and multiply itself forever in his ears.

The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting. To the just the Judge will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you!" (Matt. xxv. 34). Oh, sweet words, full of music and joy in the ears of the just! Oh, happy the place of the just beside the throne of God in heaven! Make for that place, my brethren; lead a good life, do penance for any sin which you may have unfortunately committed, get it forgiven as soon as possible at the tribunal of confession, live always in a state of grace, in friendship with God, and in peace with your neighbor.

Thus, my brethren, you will receive on earth that peace which is promised to men of good will, and you will pass through the Valley of Josaphat with good heart and glad, and you will enter with glorious and immortal bodies into Life Everlasting, there to be encircled forever with glories and with joys far beyond what the mind can conceive, or the tongue can tell. "Cast off, therefore, the works of darkness and put ye on the armor of light!" (Rom. xiii. 12). Amen.

ON PURGATORY.

"It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins."—2 MACH. xii. 46.

SINCE the coming of Christ our Lord there are four different places assigned for the souls of the dead: Heaven for all those who die in perfect friendship with God, without sin or stain upon their souls; hell for those who die in mortal sin; Limbo for infant children who die without Baptism; and Purgatory for all those who die in venial sin, or who die before they have fully atoned for the temporal punishment due to their mortal sin, the guilt and eternal punishment of which have been remitted in this life by penance.

Now, my brethren, though many die, it is to be hoped, in a state of grace, yet all do not die so stainless as not to require to be cleansed in the fires of Purgatory. Indeed, it is the common opinion of theologians that the great bulk of people who die in a state of grace shall have at least some little speck or stain on their souls when they die, and so, all such, though in a state of grace, cannot immediately pass into heaven, where "nothing defiled shall enter." They have first to pass through the fires of Purgatory until they are cleansed and purified for heaven.

The Catholic Church has from the very beginning taught the doctrine of Purgatory to her children. She has constantly and clearly explained to them that the suffering souls in Purgatory are relieved by the Masses, prayers, alms, fasts, communions, and other suffrages which the faithful on earth offer up for them to God.

"The Catholic Church," says the Council of Trent, "instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the Sacred Writings, and the ancient Tradition of the Fathers, taught in Sacred Councils, and very recently in this Œcumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar" (Sess. 25).

And, again: "If any one says that after justification and the remission of the eternal suffering due to mortal sin, there remains no temporal pain to suffer either in this world, or in Purgatory, before entering the kingdom of heaven, let him be anathema." St. Chrysostom says: "The dead may be helped by prayers, and alms, and offerings, because they were not instituted in vain, let us therefore *help them.*" St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "We pray for all those amongst us, thinking it to be the greatest help to their souls to have the holy and dread sacrifice of the altar offered in supplication for them." And St. Augustine, who always prayed for his own deceased mother at the altar, says: "By the prayer of the holy Church and the wholesome sacrifice and aims, it is not to be doubted but that the dead are assisted, so that God deals more mercifully with them than their sins deserved; for we have learned from our Fathers that it had been the universal practice of the Church to pray and offer sacrifice for those who died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. These are not, however," he carefully adds, "beneficial to all the dead, but only to those that lived so before their death, that they might be a help to them after it."

The souls in Purgatory suffer the most intense pain. They realize the truth of the words of Scripture: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" "They shall be saved, yet so as by fire!" St. Thomas and many other saints hold that this fire of Purgatory is the same as the fire of hell, except that the fire of hell is eternal in its duration and the fire of Purgatory is not. This fire would melt a mountain of bronze in an instant: it is an instrument of God's wrath; it sets the entire soul in agonizing torments. But the soul in Purgatory suffers from more than fire: it suffers by the privation of the Beatific Vision; it suffers at the thought of having those things which in life it considered to be so slight visited with such fearful punishments; it suffers at the thought of having during life neglected to atone for those sins by little meritorious actions and by indulgences; it suffers at the monstrous ingratitude of children and relatives and friends who offer no suffrage nor alms nor sacrifice to free the soul from its pain; finally, it suffers through regret at not having itself during life made sure provision for such suffrages. And so, in vain, it cries out with piteous cries: "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me!" It is certain that the pains of Purgatory may last for many years, and even to the day of judgment.

Now, my brethren, who are they who suffer thus in the fires of Purgatory? Who are they who cry out to us: "Have pity on me, have pity on me!" They are the souls of our brethren in the faith. Perhaps they are the souls of our parents, of our friends, and benefactors; or, it may be, the souls of those whom we ourselves have caused to commit sin. How can we see these dear souls in this pain without extending a hand to help them?

We can easily help them, and even rescue them from their pains; and this we can do by applying to them the benefit of our prayers, and fasts, and alms-deeds, and Holy Communions, and indulgences, and Masses The power or fruit of the Mass is infinite, and it has this power by its own intrinsic nature, apart from him who says it or gets it said.

I am not at liberty to abstain, through any mistaken delicacy, from preaching the salutary Catholic doctrine of the efficacy of Masses offered up for the souls suffering in Purgatory. In the Mass Christ offers Himself in sacrifice to His Eternal Father, and through the merits of this sacrifice He asks, and not without effect, for the deliverance of the souls in Purgatory! Hence, St. Augustine praised his deceased mother, not because she wished to have her body sumptuously buried, or embalmed, but because she desired that her memory might be made at God's altar. We read in history that there were seventeen hundred Masses offered up for Margaret, the wife of King Philip III. of Spain, on the day of her funeral; and that this intelligent and pious queen gave order in her will that one thousand Masses be said for her soul, and the king ordered twenty thousand more to be offered up for her.

Isabel, the wife of the Archduke Albertus, got forty thousand Masses said for her husband at his death, and for the same purpose heard ten Masses every day for thirty days. "Stir yourselves up, then," says St. Bernard, "to the help of the souls in Purgatory, intercede for them by your sighs, multiply for them your prayers, offer for them the august sacrifice of the holy altar."

Thus, my brethren, we are, as it were, the sovereigns of the immense and suffering kingdom of Purgatory; we hold in our hands the keys of its deep dungeon of fire!

We can very much assist the souls in Purgatory by offering up for them what is called "The Heroic Act of Charity." This consists in offering in behalf of the souls in Purgatory the personal fruits of all works of satisfaction performed by any one of the faithful during his life, as well as all the suffrages which shall be offered for him after his death. "This Heroic Act," says a great authority (Father Mumford), "is so highly meritorious of grace and glory, that the loss of the fruit of our satisfactions is nothing to be valued in regard of the gain which we purchase."

By delivering the souls in Purgatory we greatly benefit our own souls. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!" And again: "With the same measure that we mete to others it shall be measured to us again!" The assistance which we give these suffering souls now will be an effectual means to move God to stir up others to give the same assistance to us in case we be condemned to the same place hereafter, and on the contrary, "judgment without mercy to him that shows no mercy!"

The souls in Purgatory are the beloved spouses of Christ, united to Him by grace, and therefore any relief given to them is taken by God as if given to Himself. God says: "As long as you did it to the least of these, you also did it to me!" God does not let a cup of cold water, given for His sake, even to an enemy of His, go without its reward.

The souls delivered from Purgatory by your prayers and suffrages will be powerful advocates for you in heaven. As you prayed for them, so will they in their turn pray for you. And you shall sweetly experience the fruits of your charity toward the souls in Purgatory; you will have made for yourselves true friends and real in the court of Heaven, friends who will pray for your salvation and rejoice in your glory and in your companionship with themselves close to the throne of the Eternal, where all the Elect shall forevermore bask in the lovely sunshine of God's presence! Amen.

ON GRACE.

"By the grace of God I am what I am."—1 COR. xv. 10.

WE have been made, my brethren, to know, and love, and serve God here on earth, and hereafter to be happy with Him forever in heaven. But we are utterly unable by our own natural powers to do these things, or to attain this end. It is by God's grace alone we can expect to gain eternal life. Without God's help or grace we cannot avoid evil or do the least good. "Without me," says Christ, "you can do nothing" (John xv. 5). "No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). "No man can come to me," says Christ, "except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him" (John vi. 44). "We can neither think a good thought," says St. Paul, "nor speak a good word which can be useful towards our salvation, without the assistance of God" (2 Cor. iii. 5). And again, he says: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

By grace is meant, as you know, a "supernatural gift destined by God for our sanctification, and to enable us to merit heaven." There are two kinds of grace—actual and sanctifying. Actual grace is a supernatural help given to us by God to avoid evil and to do good. Actual grace operates in the soul by enlightening it, so that the soul can see what is good and what is evil: to choose what is good and reject what is evil.

Natural actions, no matter how good in themselves, can have no merit before God unless they be elevated by grace. For our works become meritorious only through the merits of Christ, and Christ's merits cannot be applied to us without grace.

God gives to all men, even to the most hardened and blinded sinners, a sufficiency of grace to work out their salvation. The words, "My grace is sufficient for thee," apply to all men. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I desire not the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked be converted from his evil ways and live." "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in me" (Osee xiii. 9). "To every man is given grace" (Eph. iv. 7).

But all men have not the same amount of grace given them: some have more, some have less; yet all have sufficient grace. Indeed, he who has least has more than enough for salvation if he only corresponds with it. God requires of us to correspond with the graces which He gives us, otherwise we shall not be saved. "God," says St. Augustine, "who made us without our concurrence, will not save us without our concurrence."

God expects that no one will reject His graces; and woe to him who does reject them. "Woe to thee Corozain, woe to thee Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon such things had been wrought, long since they would have done penance in sackcloth and ashes." When a sinner repeatedly rejects the grace of God, then God becomes provoked, and withdraws His *more powerful* graces (though He does not withdraw all His graces), and the sinner becomes hardened and blinded even as a reprobate. "Knowest thou not that the benignity of God calleth thee to penance, but according to thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the just judgment of God" (Rom. ii. 4). We are accountable to God not only for all the graces we have received from Him, but also for all the other graces which He would have conferred upon us had we not put an obstacle to them.

We may, as you know, put an obstacle to grace, for grace does not interfere with our liberty. It does not take away our free will, nor does it force us to do anything contrary to our will; but it enables us to will and to do that which we could neither will nor do without grace. Hence liberty, or free-will, which is an essential part of our nature, is in no way interfered with by grace. Our experience, indeed, only too well teaches us how often we have resisted the motions of grace. God declares that man "blessed, that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed; that could do evil things and hath not done them" (Eccles. i. 10). Grace, therefore, does not destroy our free will, but it strengthens, and rectifies, and perfects it.

Sanctifying grace is "that grace which sanctifies the soul and makes it pleasing to God." The moment we receive the precious gift of sanctifying grace we pass from the state of sin to the state of grace. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). "God will turn again and have mercy on us; He will put away our iniquities, and He will cast all our sins in the bottom of the sea." "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19).

Sanctifying grace gives us a title as sons and heirs to the kingdom of heaven, makes us temples of the Holy Ghost, gives a merit to all our good works, beautifies the soul, and clothes it with the habit of all the Christian virtues—with faith, hope, and charity. St. Paul says that sanctifying grace is "the charity of God poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. v. 5). St. Thomas Aquinas says: "The gift of grace excels every other gift that a creature can receive, since grace is a participation of the very nature of God." A soul in a state of grace enjoys a perpetual feast, for it enjoys "the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding." By grace Christ communicates to us the same splendor which He received from God: "The glory which Thou hast given me," says Christ, "I have given to them" (John xvii. 22). St. Bridget said that no one could behold the beauty of a soul in a state of grace without dying of joy. The full beauty of the Blessed Trinity dwells in a soul in the state of grace. "If any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

You see what an immense treasure is the grace of God. Kingdoms and thrones are not to be compared with it; neither are riches, nor honors, nor gold, nor silver, nor health, nor beauty. You see what a powerful and necessary instrument of our salvation it is; for it is by grace we are delivered from our past sins, and preserved from sins in the time to come. Let us, then, frequently pray to God, and always through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, for an increase of sanctifying grace. Prayer is the key of the treasury of God's grace. "Ask, and ye shall receive" (John xvi. 24). Have also frequent recourse to the sacraments, for they are the divinely instituted channels through which God has ordained that His graces should flow into our souls. It was by this means that the saints obtained not only graces for themselves, but also the grace of conversion for their neighbors. It is by this means we can keep ourselves from falling into pride, and all other sins to which man is subject. It is by prayer and the sacraments that we can obtain that clear light of grace by which to see ourselves always as we ought, so that we may say as St. Paul said: "By the grace of God I am what I am."

ON HUMILITY.

"And they said to him: Who art thou?"—JOHN i. 19.

THIS Gospel represents to us John the Baptist baptizing on the borders of the river Jordan, and edifying all Judea by the splendor of his doctrine, the sanctity of his life, and the lustre of his virtues. The Jews were so struck by his austere life that they sent to inquire whether he was the promised Messias; those sent from the Sanhedrim asked him the question: "*Who art thou?*"

This is the question, my brethren, which we should frequently put to ourselves; for the true answer to it will fill us with a sense of real humility, and it is therefore necessary for all men. This knowledge of one's self is the most sublime and useful of all the sciences; it is far beyond the sciences which treat of the motion of the heavenly bodies, or the course of the planets.

The pagans regarded the knowledge of one's self as an elementary lesson in philosophy: the words, "KNOW THYSELF," were inscribed in golden letters over the gate of the temple of Apollo. Without a proper knowledge of ourselves we are apt to fall into self-sufficiency and empty pride; it is through want of this knowledge that many think themselves above their equals, and vainly desire that others should think them so too. Who can enumerate the evils that are caused every day through want of this knowledge? How many children pretend to be wiser than their parents! How many parents, too, and others in authority, abuse their authority and indulge in tyranny or superciliousness! How many quarrels, contentions, and jealousies spring from the same source! how much pride in all its forms and degrees! It is a salutary question, then, to put betimes to ourselves: "*Who art thou?*"

St. John the Baptist manifested a true knowledge of himself when he was asked this question: "Who art thou?" He might have said many things in praise of himself; he had been born in a state of grace, he had been selected to be the Precursor of the Lord, he had it even said of him by Christ Himself that "among the born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist"; yet, he said that he was "unworthy to loose the latchet of our Saviour's shoes," that he was but the "voice of one crying in the wilderness," that he was a mere "voice" and nothing more. Behold, my brethren, the teacher of humility answering the question put to him: "Who art thou?" Behold the example which the Gospel deliberately places before us to-day for our imitation!

But let us form a correct knowledge of ourselves. Whatever virtues, and good qualities, and properties we possess come to us from God, they are God's gifts. And "every best gift," says St. James (i. 17), "and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights!" You only hold them in trust; they are talents for which you shall have to render an account, and much shall be required of those to whom much has been given: "If you have received, why do you glory as if you had not received?" (1 Cor. iv. 7). "Who, *then*, art thou?"

Again, consider the weakness and imperfections of our human nature: our bodies are subject to sickness, disease, death, and corruption; this is the lot of all men, and in this, man differs but little from the irrational animals that perish. Who, then, can pride out of his strength or his beauty? What has man to glory in but his infirmities? "What can dust and ashes be proud of?" (Eccl. x. 9). "Whoever," says St. Paul, "thinks himself something, whereas he is nothing, deceives himself" (Gal. vi. 3).

Moreover, there was a time, and that not so long ago, when you had no existence at all. In that state of non-existence you might have remained yet, and for all eternity, had not God in His infinite goodness called you into existence, and gratuitously given you your life and all that you have. The length of your life upon earth, too, is uncertain; you cannot promise yourself a day, nor even an hour. Each moment has to be specially granted to you by God, or else you would instantly collapse into nothing: "Who, *then*, art thou?" Such, my brethren, is what you are as to your body; now let us consider what you are as to your soul.

Your soul, though it raises you above all the other visible works of creation, is, on account of the sin of our first parents, more prone to vice than to virtue, more prone to error than to truth, more apt to fall into sin than to atone for it when committed. It is slow to do good and disinclined to co-operate with the grace of God. It is not fully conscious to itself of being pleasing to God; for "no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccl. ix. 1). Let every man, then, seriously ask himself the question: "Who art thou?"

What, then, has man to be proud of? Verily, my brethren, I know not; for there is nothing that man can call his own, excepting only his sins.

And perhaps we, my brethren, have committed many sins, and even mortal sins; and if so, have we not deserved the thunderbolts of God's anger, have we not deserved the punishment of hell-fire, have we not deserved to be trampled upon by all of God's creatures? What wonder if all God's creatures rose up against us, and struck us down for having by our sins outraged the majesty of their Great Creator! Let the sinner, then, frequently, in presence of God, and of God's creatures, ask himself the question: "Who art thou?"

But it may be said that the Sacrament of Penance washes away all sin, and therefore for our sins there is no need to be humble. Yes, surely, the Sacrament of Penance does wash away all sin, but it does so only when the sinner has genuine humility. "God resists the proud, and gives His grace *only* to the humble" (James iv. 6). God forgives those only who ask pardon with the proper dispositions. Are you sure that you have had these proper and necessary dispositions, and that your sins are therefore fully pardoned? Remember, God says: "No man knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred!" (Eccl. ix. 1).

And suppose you did know that your sins were pardoned and that you were in a state of grace at present, who can tell how long you will continue so? Samson fell, and Solomon fell, and David fell, and even Peter the Apostle, who was considered to be firm as a rock, fell into sin. "There can be no security here upon earth," says St. Bernard, "after the first angel has been lost in heaven, the first man lost in Paradise, and Judas the Apostle lost in the school of Jesus Christ." It is possible that he who is in sin to-day may humble himself and go to Confession to-morrow; and you who are in a state of grace to-day may fall to-morrow, and through pride never rise any more. God forbid such a case, but it is possible unless you have humility. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall!" Day by day we march toward the grave and the judgment-seat, and we know not what will be our lot for all eternity in the other world! It is therefore wise to put to ourselves betimes the thoughtful question: "Who art thou?"

These considerations, my brethren, lead us to a true knowledge of ourselves; they help us to see our unworthiness, our nothingness, and sinfulness; they show us what a right we have to be humble.

In what, then, does humility briefly consist? It consists in a true knowledge by which we consider ourselves really contemptible in our own eyes. Humility is indispensably necessary for salvation; without humility it is utterly impossible for us to please God; for, "God resists the proud, and giveth His grace *only* to the humble." We cannot expect to be among the number of the elect, unless we conform to the image of Him who is "meek and humble of heart." "Those," says St. Paul, "whom *God 'predestinated'* to be among the number of the elect must be made *conformable* to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29), that is, they must be "humble of heart."

Humility is required in all persons, no matter what state or condition of life they may be in. It is the entrance to religion, it is the root and foundation of all virtues. As you cannot have a house without a foundation, so neither can you have a virtue without humility. St. Augustine says: "Humility is not only the foundation, but it is the perfection of virtue." Humility is a grand and stately edifice which rises high in proportion as the foundation is laid low, so that all the virtues increase or decrease just in proportion to one's humility. The Holy Fathers compare humility to those fruitful valleys which are irrigated by the streams which ever flow through them, whilst the proud hills are dried up by the burning sun, and the parching winds, and so produce neither fruit nor verdure.

St. Augustine proposes and answers the following questions: "What is the first thing in all religion?—Humility. What is the second?—Humility. What is the third?—Humility." Humility is then the virtue of virtues.

Humility was the favorite virtue of all the saints. The more that God rewarded their merit with His grace the more they sincerely humbled themselves in His sight, and the more they humbled themselves the more again they were exalted, for God exalts the humble. John the Baptist humbled himself, and for this Christ Himself declared that "among the born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." The Blessed Virgin humbled herself, and the Scripture says: "Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!" (Luke i. 48). Humility was the prominent characteristic of our Blessed Lord; it was the constant, uniform virtue which shone out in His life ever and always. His other virtues He manifested only occasionally, such as His wisdom among the Jewish doctors, His bounty in the desert, His power at Cana, His charity during His public life, but His humility appeared always. All the acts of His life were but as links in an unbroken chain of humility. Humility was the darling virtue of His heart, the virtue which He wished His disciples specially to copy from Him: "Learn of me," said He, "to be meek and humble of heart." "O humility, humility!" exclaimed St. Bernard, "how precious, how amiable, and how dear shouldst thou be to us for such an example, since the Eternal Son of the Living God was pleased to be Incarnated with thee and to expire in thy arms on the Cross!"

But, that we may the better know the value of humility, let us give a glance at the opposite vice, pride. Pride, my brethren, as you know, brought Lucifer, the prince of the angels, from his exalted place in heaven, down to the infernal regions, there to suffer tortures without end; pride made a heretic of Luther, pride brings infamy and disgrace upon the brows of the proud, pride makes those who have it the scorn and contempt of men, and more, it makes them abominations in the sight of God. The proud man is an abomination in the sight of God. "God resists the proud." He brings about changes in circumstances whereby the proud man meets with some unexpected and unwelcome disgrace, and so what was an object of pride becomes an object of shame and confusion.

True humility receives a twofold reward: honor before men and grace before God. The humble man is universally respected, he is honored everywhere, he is a favorite in society, his humility gives him a noble aspect and a winning grace; it is beautiful as the costliest jewel; like a star, it trembles as it shines, and yet, through its trembling, it brighter seems to be. Humility makes a man truly generous and brave; by it he overcomes not only what is most difficult, but he even conquers himself. Whilst the proud man is fettered with a dread of humiliation, the humble man marches on courageously; he relies not upon himself, but exchanges his own strength, and puts on the strength of God: with this strength he can do all things.

God rewards humility with His grace: "He giveth His grace to the humble"; He gives the grace of repentance to the greatest sinner that sincerely humbles himself. King David humbled himself, and God mercifully looked down upon his humility, and forgave even his sins of adultery and murder. Achab humbled himself, and thereby stopped the hand of the Almighty uplifted to strike him. Nabuchodonosor humbled himself before the Lord, and for that he was restored to the throne, after he had been reduced by Almighty God to the level of a beast, and had been seven years living and sleeping upon the grass of the forest. Mary Magdalen humbled herself and cast herself down at the feet of our Saviour, and begged His mercy and pardon, and God forgave her all her sins, though, indeed, they were many and grievous, and not even fit to be named except at Confession.

Let us, then, my brethren, frequently and earnestly beg of God to grant us this all-important amiable virtue of humility; let us ask it of Him in the words of St. Augustine: "*O Lord, teach me to know Thee and to know myself; to know Thee that I may love and glorify Thee alone in all things; and to know myself*, that I may never even secretly confide in myself or ascribe anything to myself, or my own merits!" Amen.

THE ANGELS.

> "There shall no evil come to thee, nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling, for He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon."—Psalm xc. 10, 13.

IT is fitting that we should pay honor and veneration to the holy angels of God. The praise which we give to the angels does not in any way lessen the praises due to Almighty God; on the contrary we praise God in a way that is specially dear to Him when we praise His holy angels; for they are the beautiful works of His hands, and the wonderful instruments of His mercy and goodness. When we praise the angels we honor the King not only in His person, but even in His servants. Many of the Holy Fathers went about from city to city, and from village to village, publishing the praises of God by preaching on the subject of the *Angels*.

The angels are pure spirits without a body, created to adore and enjoy God in heaven; the angels are often sent as messengers from God to man, hence the name of "angel," or messenger. They are also appointed by God as our guardians: "He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways!" The greatness of the angels is what no tongue can adequately tell, no mind can think; their nature is transcendently sublime, their excellences are like the ocean, boundless and fathomless.

The angels are all intelligence, they know things without labor, without delay, and without the least doubt or uncertainty; they thoroughly understand everything at a glance; things utterly unknown to the greatest human minds are intimately known to the angels. The Sacred Scriptures describe the angels as robed in garments of brightness and of fire: "And the living creatures (that is, the angels) ran and returned like flashes of lightning" (Ezech. i. 14). Their brightness far surpasses the brightness of the sun. St. Anselm says that the brightness of one angel would eclipse the brightness of as many suns as there are stars in the sky. The angels enjoy God in heaven, they perpetually adore Him, they practice a constant and perfect fidelity to Him, they burn with love for Him, and sweetly sing His praises evermore; from out the nine choirs of angels there comes unceasingly a strain of music, sweet and thrilling, and enrapturing.

Almighty God has given immense power to the angels, hence in Scripture they are called the "powers" and the "hosts" of the Lord, "mighty in strength, executing His word." One single angel could defeat millions of the bravest men; nay, even all the men in the world together. The angels can cause hurricanes and thunderstorms, and shipwrecks, and earthquakes; they can stop the course of rivers, inflict incurable disorders, or cure the worst maladies; they can produce a famine or bestow abundance: and any of these marvellous effects they can cause in almost a moment of time. The angels can liberate from prison, as in the case of St. Peter (Acts xii. 7); they can rescue from lions, as in the case of Daniel (Dan. vi. 22); they can rescue from calumny, as in the case of Susannah (Dan. viii. 55); and from the sword, as in the case of Isaac (Gen. xx. 11); they can heal from disease, as in the case of the "sick, and the blind, and lame," who were cured at Jerusalem by an angel moving the waters of the Probatica (John v. 4).

God has adorned the angels with beauty; their beauty far surpasses all the beauties of art, or of nature. Indeed, if all the beauty-spots of this world were put together—the beauty of the brilliant sun, which shines out, as it were, from the bosom of the Great Creator; the azure beauty of the sparkling skies; the graceful outlines of the distant mountains, the cliffs, and sea; the beauty of hill, and dale, and pompous grove, and ancient woodland; the beauty of summer flower, and green field, and lovely river, and ancient abbey, and stately palace, and gorgeous cathedral with graceful spire pointing untired finger to Him on high; if all these beauties, and all others that the mind can imagine, were placed in panoramic view before you, they would not form even a degree of comparison with the surpassing beauty of the angels. The angels' beauty is celestial; it is, as it were, a web woven of beauty and loveliness. The faces of the angels are like resplendent mirrors set round about and having a common focus—the FACE OF GOD!—each one reflects in itself the eternal beauty of God, and this indescribable image on each one and in all is mirrored in God, and again reflected back through all without end. And this bright, joyous, and ever-multiplying vision is carried on for eternity. Nor do the rays of beauty, as they pass and repass, ever interrupt one another; they glide their bright way calmly and tranquilly, even as the rings upon the water, or as the rays of the bright sun reflected in the calm, clear bosom of some lovely lake! I can fancy, my brethren, how your hearts beat within you, and how your souls fill up with love for the angels, for I know it is pre-eminently true to say of you that you are disposed to love what is beautiful, and noble, and perfect.

Nor are the angels wanting in love for you; through their love of God they love you with an intense, indescribable love. This love extends to all men, even to those away in the wild Bush of Australia, or in the boundless forests of Canada, or in the wastes of Africa, or in the black coalpits of England, to those in caves or to those in dungeons. Through love for us they accompany us wherever we go. "The angels," says St. Augustine, "go in and out with us, having their eyes always fixed upon us, and upon all that we are doing; if we stop anywhere, they stop also; if we go forth to walk, they bear us company; if we journey into another country, they follow us; go where we will, by land or by sea, they are ever with us."

Next to God, the angels are our oldest friends and our best; they eagerly desire to promote our temporal and eternal interest; they have determined that none should surpass them in love for us; their love for us, then, is greater than that of a brother, or a father, or a mother. They "bear us in their hands"; they watch over us day and night. "They who keep Israel neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. cxx. 4). Their love for us is unceasing, it is uniform, it never alters, never varies, even though we should fall into sin, and treat them and our good God with ingratitude and coldness.

The angels guide us through life, and preserve us from the pitfalls and precipices which beset our path. Through love for us they often take the form of men, and appear so visibly; love for man is then the ruling passion of the angels.

The holy angels assist us in *temporal* things; indeed, whatsoever benefit or comfort we receive from creatures comes to us through the agency of the angels: they are intermediate powers between heaven and earth. St. Francis and St. Nicholas Tolentine were solaced in their sickness by the enchanting strains of music which were played for them by the angels; Agar's child was preserved from dying of thirst in the wilderness by an angel who pointed out a "well of water" to the afflicted mother (Gen. xxi. 14); Elias, the prophet, received from an angel food, in the strength of which he walked forty days and forty nights till he reached the mountain of Horeb (2 Kings xix. 5); Tobias was accompanied on his journey by Raphael the Archangel (Tob. xii. 15); the Israelites were led for forty years, in their journey through the Wilderness, by an angel: for it was an angel of God who conducted "the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night," and who rescued them from the hand of Pharaoh; for Pharaoh, with a mighty army of 250,000 men, pursued the Israelites to the Red Sea. "And, behold, the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went in through the midst of the sea dried up: for the water was as a wall on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursuing went in after them, and all Pharaoh's horses and his chariots and horsemen through the midst of the sea, ... and as the Egyptians were fleeing away the waters came upon them and they were shut up in the middle of the waves" (Exod. xiv. 21, etc.); and there remained not a man to tell Egypt the news.

The angels help us to attain our true end, that is, eternal happiness in heaven, they desire to have Christ's soul-saving wishes carried out in our regard, they minister to our wants: "For," says St. Paul, "are not all the angels ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14). The angels prompt apostolic men to go and preach the Gospel with a spirit of devouring zeal, to call sinners to repentance, to go in search of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to bring him home," to extend the Samaritan's healing hand to drunkards and to all those who have fallen amongst "robbers," and are "stripped," and "wounded," and "half dead." The angels accompany the ministers of the Gospel. We read in the life of St. Martial, that twelve angels visibly assisted him in his apostolic functions; we read, also, that St. Dominick was accompanied by angels who used to bring a light to his room, open the door for him, and conduct him to the church, where, in presence of the adorable Sacrament of the altar, he remained as a bee upon the flower, drawing in the honey of true zeal, whereby he converted hardened sinners and won countless souls for the kingdom of heaven. Oh, with what joy did the angels announce Jesus' plan for man's Redemption, his Incarnation, and Birth, and Death, and Resurrection! Oh, how there is "joy in heaven before the angels over one sinner that does penance more than over ninety-nine just that need not penance"! Oh, how the angels rejoice with the father of the "Prodigal," as he welcomes home his "child that was lost," and puts upon his finger the ring of unending love.

The angels help us in our warfare with the enemies of our salvation. Our life, as you know, my brethren, is a perpetual warfare with Satan and his wicked angels. These enemies have sworn, one and all, to unfit us for heaven; they are, therefore, much to be dreaded, and, moreover, they are countless in their numbers, mighty in their strength, cruel in their fury, terrible in their cunning, matchless in their skill, indefatigable in their pursuit, and specially dangerous, because they are invisible and penetrate everywhere. God, seeing our inability to contend with such a mighty overwhelming force, and wishing earnestly to bring us to heaven, has mercifully supplied us with the necessary additional help, by giving us the angels for our allies; and thus the forces on our side far surpass the forces against us, both in numbers, and skill, and valor, and power.

"There shall no evil come to thee . . . . for He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. . . . . Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon."

The angels are ever with us though we do not see them. The servant of Eliseus the prophet, rising early one morning, went out, and saw an immense army of Assyrians round about the city, and horses and chariots, and he told him, saying: "Alas, alas, alas, my lord! what shall we do?" And Eliseus prayed and said: "Lord, open his eyes that he may see!" And behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Eliseus. Thus, my brethren, are millions of angels ever ready to fight for you, even though you see them not. "He has given His angels charge over thee," etc. God, my brethren, has given His angels charge not only over individuals, but even over nations. In His wonderful mercy He has thus guarded our own beloved island and saved her from all her enemies. You know, my brethren, how Ireland has been surrounded by enemies from time to time who threatened to destroy her Faith and Nationality; you know how in the ninth century, when Ireland was the admired of nations for the lustre of her learning and sanctity, wearing the singular title which the nations gave her—"The Island of Saints and of Doctors"—receiving students into her schools from all parts of the world, and sending forth missionaries of the Gospel to the ends of the earth; you know how at that time the island was surrounded by the Danes; you know how in the twelfth century Henry II. attacked Ireland, and how, in the sixteenth, Henry VIII. attacked it and commenced that terrible persecution which lasted for 300 years; the best blood of Ireland was spilled upon a thousand battle-fields: the Irish were asked to give up their Faith and Fatherland, or if not the whole strength of earth's mightiest people would be brought to bear down upon them and crush them: but the battle was fought not against Ireland, but against Ireland with the angels for her allies; and thus Ireland has come forth victorious from the struggle; the palm of victory is in her hand, the Faith planted by St. Patrick is still with her, and, like the shamrock, she has it in the land to-day as green and as flourishing and as triumphant as ever! Have great confidence, then, in the angels of God, and have recourse to them in all dangers, and temptations, and afflictions, and call upon them to shield you always, especially at the supreme moment of death.

The closest friendships of this world usually end at death: the friendship of the angels is extended to us after death. The learned Suarez is of opinion that at the Day of Judgment the angels will collect the ashes of those whose guardians they have been during life. The angels visit the suffering souls in purgatory and console them, and obtain relief for them; and this they do by the prayers, and Masses, and alms, and other good works which they inspire persons to offer for them.

My dear brethren, practice a tender and constant devotion to the holy angels, imitate their fidelity to God, copy into your lives their humility and their innocence, and their beautiful *angelical* purity; thus you will merit a place with the angels and their Queen in heaven, there to wear the crown woven by angels' hands, there to be clothed in royalty and covered with glory, there to enjoy the enrapturing songs of Sion, there to see "the Lamb that was slain," with His wounds beauteous as five roseate suns, there to look at the Fountain of Love playing in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and giving out new glories and new joys to all the blessed, there, in a word, to gaze with rapture upon the Beatific Vision, the face of God, which is the source of all that is beautiful, the centre of those joys that last forever.

ON PRAYER.

"And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."—LUKE xi. 9, 10.

THERE is not," says St. Liguori, "a thing which preachers, and confessors, and spiritual books should insist upon with more warmth and energy than prayer." Without prayer, neither sermons, nor meditations, nor good resolutions, nor a knowledge of one's duty will be sufficient for salvation. For God has repeatedly declared that He will give the graces necessary for salvation only to those who pray: "Ask, and it shall be given you!" That is, ask *first*, and *then* it shall be given you.

Prayer is an elevation of the soul and heart to God, to adore Him, to thank Him for His goodness, and to petition Him for all necessaries for soul and body. Prayer, like all other good things, is a gift from God. Of ourselves we are not "sufficient to think a good thought," nor to speak a good word. Hence, Almighty God says: "I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers" (Zach. xii. 10).

"God wills all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4), and that no one should be lost. For this end He has promised to give sufficient grace to all; but this grace, however, He has promised only on condition that we pray for it. He might, of course, have established a different order if He chose; but He has not so chosen it. Hence, St. Thomas says: "Whatever graces God has from all eternity determined to give us, He will only give them if we pray for them." Of course the *first grace*, such as the call to the Faith or to Penance, is an exception; but, with this exception prayer is absolutely necessary for adults (that is, those who have attained the years of discretion), as a means of salvation, and its want cannot be supplied by anything else: not by alms, nor by fasts, nor by any other good works. The learned Lessius says: "It is to be held as of faith that prayer is necessary to salvation for adults, as is gathered from the Sacred Scriptures" (Less. de just, lib. ii. 37).

The Sacred Scripture emphatically inculcates the absolute necessity of prayer. "Pray, that you enter not into temptation" (Luke xxii. 40); "Watch ye and pray" (Matt. xxvi. 41); "Ask, and you shall receive" (John xvi. 24); "And He spoke to them a parable, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). These words: "pray," "watch," "ask," and "ought," imply a strict precept of prayer; and this precept has not only been delivered to us in words, but it has been enforced by the example of our Lord Himself. On one occasion He retired into the desert and there fasted and *prayed* for forty days; on other occasions He spent whole nights in prayer (Luke vi. 12); and we know how He prepared Himself for His Passion by fervent and repeated prayer in the garden, and how He not only gave instructions as to the manner of prayer, but even furnished the very words: "Our Father," etc. (Matt. vi. 9). And all this He did, not through any necessity on His part, but to show us an example, and to convince us of the absolute necessity of prayer. St. Thomas, the Angel of the schools, holds that the precept of prayer binds under pain of grievous sin, especially in three cases:—1, when a man is in a state of mortal sin; 2, when he is in danger of falling into mortal sin; 3, when he is in danger of death. And St. Liguori states, that he who neglects prayer for a whole month, or at most for *two* months, cannot be excused from mortal sin.

Prayer is required in order to keep the commandments of God and of His Church. For we cannot keep the commandments without grace; and grace is given only to those who pray: "You have not because you ask not" (James iv. 2); therefore prayer is necessary in order to be able to keep the commandments, and thus to enter into eternal life.

Prayer possesses a wondrous efficacy. From time to time Almighty God commands us to do things far beyond our natural strength, and even beyond the ordinary grace given to men; yet He does not command impossibilities, for He gives us all the needful help in prayer. And He requires of us only to ask Him for it. "God," says the Council of Trent, "does not command impossibilities, but by commanding us (to do anything), He admonishes us to do what we can, to pray for what help we need, and then He helps us to make us able" (Sess. vi., chap. 2). If any one falls into sin it is through want of prayer in the time of temptation. And here it is to be specially remarked that no one can resist the impure temptations of the flesh without prayer. "Chastity," says St. Liguori, "is a virtue which we have not strength to practice unless God gives it to us; and God does not give this strength except to him who asks or *prays* for it." "Prayer," says Gregory of Nyssa, "is the bulwark of chastity." And, again, Solomon the wise says: "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, I went to the Lord and besought Him" (viii. 21). When we pray to God He communicates

His strength to us, and thus each one can say, as the apostle said: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). There is, therefore, nothing stronger than a man who prays. How consoling, my brethren, to think that we have within our power all the graces and assistance that we require, if only we pray for them. "Ask, and ye shall receive!"

Now, my brethren, how is it that, notwithstanding the many and infallible promises made by God with regard to prayer, we sometimes pray, and yet do not receive what we pray for? Is it because *God* is faithless to His promises; or, is it because *we* do not pray in the proper manner? God cannot be faithless to His promises, otherwise He would cease to be God; His word, like Himself, must stand forever. The reason, then, why our prayers are not sometimes heard is, because we do not pray in the proper manner, and with the proper conditions. "You ask and you receive not, because you ask amiss" (James iv. 3). It is therefore of the utmost practical importance to know accurately what those conditions are which are required in order to render our prayers acceptable to God and beneficial to ourselves.

The first condition is that we must always offer our prayers to God with an *humble* heart. At prayer we must look upon ourselves, as indeed we really are, utterly unworthy of any favor from God; and that, so far from having any claim upon His goodness, we deserve rather to be very severely punished on account of our many sins and our great ingratitude. When, therefore, we go before God in prayer, we must carefully lay aside all conceit and presumption and self-complacency. "The Almighty," says St. Liguori, "does not hear the supplications of the proud, who trust in their own strength, but leaves them to their own weakness and misery, which, when they are abandoned by divine grace, will infallibly lead them to perdition." If our prayers be not attended with *humility* God will not grant our petitions. "God resists the proud, and giveth His grace to the humble" (James iv. 6). On the other hand, "the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold" (Eccl. xxxv. 21). The saints never failed to ground their prayers on humility; they acknowledged God's supreme dominion over them, and their total dependence on Him, and thus they gave due honor to Almighty God, and their prayers were always heard. "Thy power, O God, is not in a multitude, nor is Thy pleasure in the strength of horses, nor from the beginning have the proud been acceptable to Thee, but the prayer of the humble and meek hath always pleased Thee" (Judith ix. 16). "I shall speak to my Lord," said Abraham, "though I am but dust and ashes" (Gen. xviii. 27). Peter and David, and the Prodigal, and the humble publican, are memorable instances of the efficacy of humility in prayer.

A *contrite* heart is also required in order to secure real efficacy in our prayers. God sets His face against the sinner who wilfully persists in mortal sin. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears open to their prayers; but the countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil things, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Ps. xxxiii. 17). But the sinner in mortal sin is not, therefore, to give up prayer; for the Lord is ever ready to hear even the greatest sinners, provided they have a sincere desire to turn to Him and to forsake their evil ways. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He is bountiful to forgive" (Is. lv. 6). "A *contrite* and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. l. 19). He who disobeys the commands of God cannot reasonably expect that God will listen to him when he prays; for God will hear those only who hear Him; and we must hear God by hearing Him in His commandments, and obeying every one of them. "He that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination" (Prov. xxviii. 9). On the other hand, he who hears the commandments, and keeps them, is sure to be heard when he prays: "Whatsoever we shall ask we shall receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do these things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John iii. 21). And again: "The continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (John v. 16).

We should always offer our prayers to God with *fervor* and *attention;* at prayer the mind and heart should go with the tongue, otherwise there will be no prayer; it will be a mere pitiful lip-service, something like the words repeated by a man in his sleep, or out of his senses. The substance of prayer requires that there be an elevation of the soul to God. Sometimes, however, it is very difficult to keep the mind thus elevated during the time of prayer, and distractions of many kinds and forms interfere; these distractions, if driven away, or firmly opposed, produce no hurt to the soul; they serve as an occasion of merit. But if the distractions be wilfully and deliberately entertained, our so-called prayers offend Almighty God, and are an abomination in His sight. God rejected the prayers of the Pharisees, for they were wanting in fervor: "This people," said the Lord, "honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; and in vain do they worship me" (Matt. xv. 8, 9). Wherefore, we should always prepare ourselves well before we pray, according to the words of Ecclesiasticus: "Before prayer prepare thy soul and be not as a man that tempteth God" (xviii. 23).

Perseverance is a most necessary condition of prayer. God often delays to grant the object of our prayers in order to try our patience and to exercise our faith, and hope, and love: He likes to grant us what we ask (provided it be good for us), but then He often wishes to grant it as the reward of our perseverance. We should not, therefore, cease from prayer though God should think fit to delay in granting what we ask. "We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). Should the will at any time fail, let us ask of God, grace and strength to persevere; we have many examples to show us the necessity of perseverance in prayer; the blind beggar on the road to Jericho was not cured of his blindness the first time he cried out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke xviii. 38); the woman of Canaan did not get her daughter cured the first time she cried: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil!" (Matt. xv. 22). He first tried her faith and perseverance in prayer, and then he granted her what she asked: "O woman," said He, "great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt; and her daughter was cured from that hour" (*Ib.* 28). We read in the First Book of Kings (chap. i.), that Anna, the mother of Samuel, who had been barren for a long time, and had suffered many reproaches on that account, prayed *perseveringly* to the Lord, and He heard her, and gave her a son: "As Anna had her heart full of grief . . . . she *multiplied* prayers before the Lord. . . . . And Anna conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel; because she had *asked* him of the Lord." By perseverance in prayer Moses averted the wrath of God kindled against the people for their sins (Exod. xxxii. 14); by perseverance in prayer Elias raised to life the son of the widow of Sarepta, and by the same means he opened and shut the heavens; "He prayed that it might not rain . . . . and it rained not. . . . . And, again, he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (3 Kings xvii. and xviii.). St. Monica prayed for the conversion of her son Augustine for fifteen years, and it was only after that long time that God heard her prayers, and rewarded her perseverance. St. James tells us that it is the *continual* prayer of the just man that availeth much (v. 17).

When we pray we must always have great *confidence* that our prayers will be heard; we have solid grounds for this confidence—God's infallible word. God has graciously pledged His word to grant us what we ask: "Ask, and you shall receive" (John xvi. 24); "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, *believing* (that is, having confidence), you shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22); "You have not, because you ask not" (James iv. 2) with confidence; and, again: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you" (Ps. xlix. 15). God, then, has bound Himself to grant what we may ask, and He cannot break His word, otherwise He would cease to be God. Prayer is the only petition that is always granted; other petitions depend entirely upon the dispositions of the persons to whom the petitions are addressed, and are, accordingly, attended with doubt and uncertainty; but in prayer there is no room for doubt; God has made a promise of granting all petitions that are duly addressed to Him, and His promise, like Himself, shall stand forever! All confidence should be placed in God, and in the merits of His Son, and no confidence whatever should be placed in ourselves, or in our own merits. The Centurion mentioned in the Gospel (Matt. viii. 8), placed such entire *confidence* in the word of our Lord, that his servant was cured: "Lord," said he, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed! . . . . And Jesus said to the Centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee; and his servant was healed at the same hour" (viii. 13). "If any of you," says St. James, "want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: but let him ask in *faith*, nothing wavering. . . . . Let not that man (who wavereth) think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (i. 5, 7). Let us, then, always "go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid" (Heb. iv. 16).

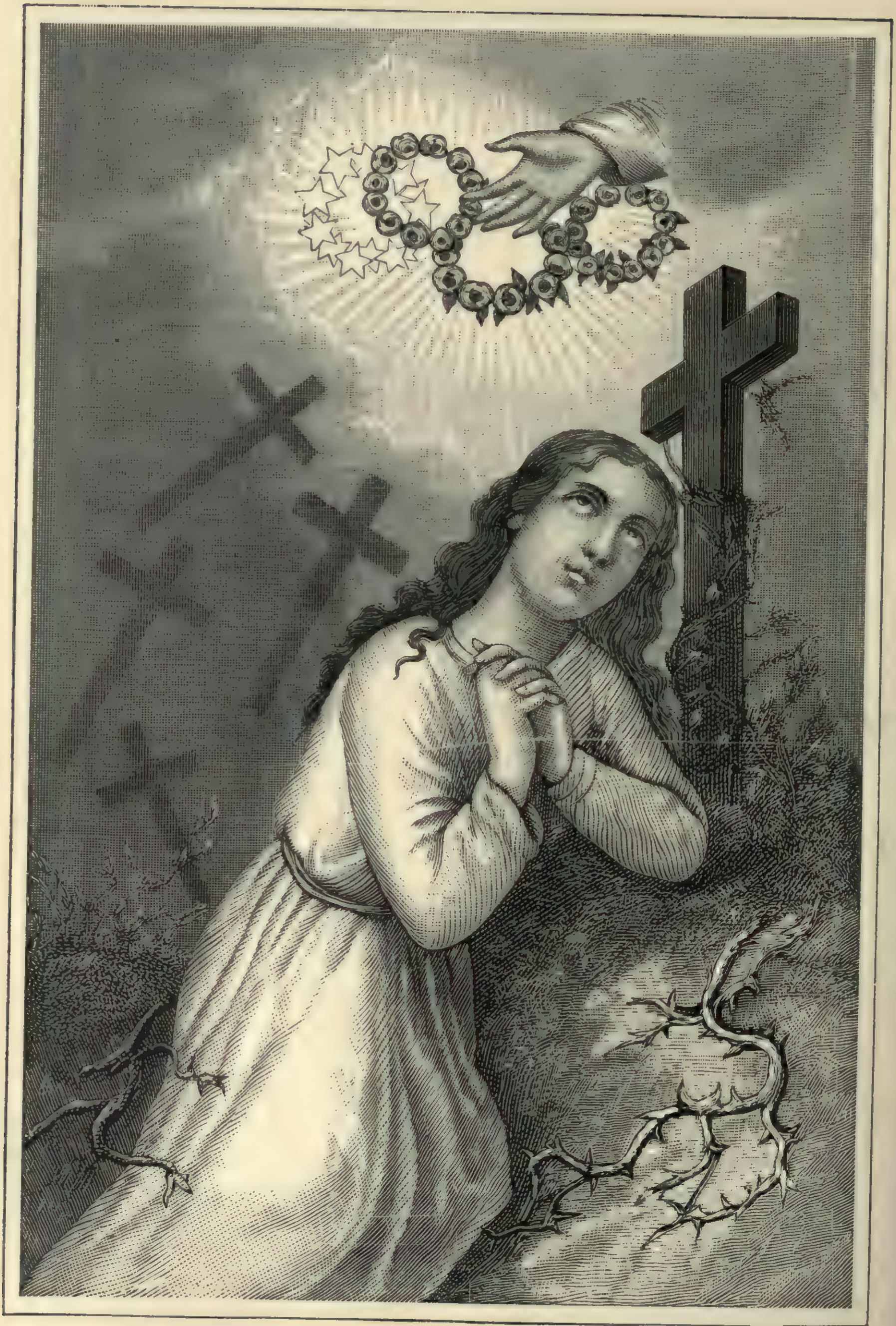
But, my brethren, though Almighty God has bound Himself to grant our petitions, yet He has bound Himself only on condition that we pray with *resignation to His will;* and this is fit, and reasonable, though indeed we may not be able to understand why He should grant some petitions at once and delay others, and even sometimes refuse them, and grant a different thing altogether. God's ways are not our ways, and He understands better than we what will promote the interests of our immortal souls. When we pray for spiritual favors necessary for our salvation, we may always expect them; but we must be prepared, however, to receive them at the time, and after the manner, and in the proportion that God sees will benefit us most. When we pray for temporal things, such as riches, honors, pleasures, good health, deliverance from sickness, trouble, and the like, we must not invariably expect them to be granted; for, though it is laudable to pray for them as aids, or helps to salvation, yet God often withholds them from us; and this He does through love, when He sees they would prove an injury rather than a service to us. "God," says St. Augustine, "denies some things in His mercy which He grants in His wrath." What we think would be the greatest service to us would be often, perhaps, the greatest injury to us; and, therefore, it is best for us to rely altogether upon God's sweet will in our regard. "This is the confidence which we have towards Him: That whatsoever we shall ask *according to His will*, He heareth us" (1 John v. 14).

The last and by far the most important condition required in order to render our prayer efficacious is that it be offered *in the name* and *through the merits of Jesus Christ.* The name of *Jesus Christ* serves as a royal seal upon our prayers, and His merits furnish the ground upon which all our claims securely rest. Hence, the Church usually terminates her prayers with the words "Through the same *Jesus Christ*," etc. Prayers offered up in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ carry with them such weight and influence that they cannot fail to be heard by our heavenly Father; for Christ Himself has said: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: if you ask the Father for anything in *my name*, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John xvi. 23, etc.).

Oh! my dear brethren, if we always pray with these proper conditions our prayers shall surely be heard, and our "joy shall be full": we shall here on earth find innumerable graces of the choicest kind. And, thus, through the mercy of God, and the powerful intercession of Mary Immaculate, and all the other saints, we shall save our immortal souls, and hereafter receive the glorious reward promised to those who pray; the ecstatic sight of God Himself, face to face, not transiently, as a bright flash of light renewed occasionally to feed our immortality with contentment and bliss, but as an abiding VISION, sweet, and beautiful, and enrapturing, such as the face of God must be in the kingdom of His glory! Amen.

REVEREND MICHAEL B. BUCKLEY.

Reverend MICHAEL BERNARD BUCKLEY was born in Ireland, in the year 1831, and ordained to the holy priesthood about 1855. In 1870 he began a lecturing tour in the United States and Canada, and the discourses delivered by Father Buckley reproduced in this volume will be thoroughly appreciated by all admirers of pious reading.



The Pledge of Happiness.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

"God is wonderful in His Saints."—PSALM lxvii. 36.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—There is scarcely a day in the year on which the Church does not commemorate the virtues, celebrate the glories, and invoke the intercession of some Saint of God. But on this day, with one voice of universal jubilee, she sings the praises of the whole sainted host—of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of the martyrs, confessors, and virgins—who fought the good fight upon earth, and have won the crown of eternal glory in Heaven. The days of the year being so few, when compared with the catalogue of the glorified, the Church celebrates this one, grand, comprehensive feast that no Saint may be deprived of the honor which is his due; or be left unsolicited for those prayers by which he may assist mankind in the work of salvation. That the Church, in the celebration of this solemnity, acts with characteristic, that is, consummate wisdom, no Christian is presumed to doubt; but for the strengthening of our faith, as well as the enlightenment of our understanding, it is well that we should know the motives by which she is influenced in establishing festivals for the honor of the Saints. One motive, and the strongest, is, that thus she may give glory to God: for, in the conquest achieved by the Saints over the world, the flesh, and the devil, is manifested the invincible power of Divine grace by which so great a triumph was accomplished. The Saint was human and weak, but in the hands of God he became a tower of strength—he did all things in Him who fortified him. God was the General, and the Saint was the soldier—the victory was the victory of grace; the glory was the glory of the Almighty. Well has the psalmist thus exclaimed, "Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis," "God is wonderful in His Saints."

Again, the Church celebrates the memory of the Saint because he *was* a valiant soldier, a faithful servant of the Most High, and merits praise for his achievements in the battle with God's enemies. Will the world—which erects imperishable monuments to valor, to genius, to worth; which venerates the most trifling relics of those whom its votaries call great; which perpetuates in bronze and marble, and immortalizes in music and song, the mighty ones of the earth—deny its homage to the soldiers and servants of that God who made the earth, and who, after lives of insuperable heroism, reign with Him in unfading glory? God Himself has honored the Saints—during their lives He gave them the power to arrest unerring nature in her course; to call the living water from the solid rock; to stay the sun in his mid-heaven career; to pass unscathed through the burning fire; to remove mountains; to raise the dead to life. Will the world refuse to honor those whom the world's Creator has so singularly honored?

Another motive which directs the Church in commemorating the glories of the Saints is, that by so doing she may hold them up as models for imitation to her children still on earth, to show the possibility not only of virtue but of heroism, and to entice to the practice of it by proposing the contemplation of its rewards; and the last motive of all is, that she may procure for us with God the powerful intercession of those His chosen servants whom He honors so much, and whose entreaties, now that they are glorified, He hears with delight and heeds with the accordance of His benignity, His mercy, and His love.

On this day, then, the Church honors God in all His Saints. She celebrates the triumphs of His grace through all time in their labors, their sufferings and death—in the wisdom of their teaching, in the sublimity of their ambition, in their unconquerable fidelity, in their undying love for Him. She honors them all to-day with one shout of praise and benediction. She holds them up to her children as a galaxy of heroic virtue, to guide them through this valley of tears. She implores them to join their voices together in prayer at the throne of the All-merciful, that He may give grace and happiness to all mankind. "Let us," then, in the language of the liturgy of this day, "let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating this festive day in honor of all the Saints, in whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and give glory to the Son of God."

Notwithstanding the reasonableness of the Church in appointing festivals in honor of the Saints, there are many who style themselves Christians, and yet who regard, some with indifference, and many with contempt—those great servants of God. They describe the Saints as men of feeble intellects, carried away into absurd excesses by a spirit of fanaticism; foolishly denying themselves the legitimate pleasures of life; mean and vulgar in their tastes and habits; ignorant and unlettered: in a word, not to be compared for a moment to the humblest of those whose names swell the record of the world's greatness.

This is a question, my brethren, which can be examined with great spiritual profit: and I am prepared to prove, by the very arguments of worldlings themselves, that the humblest Saint in heaven was a greater man than the proudest warrior, philosopher, statesman, or philanthropist, before whose memory the world bows down in most respectful homage. How shall we discover the truth in this investigation? What are the marks and tokens of true greatness? The world answers, and we must agree with the world, that he alone is truly great—1st, whose conceptions are sublime, and whose ambition soars above the common aspirations of mankind; 2dly, who is a being of indomitable courage; and, 3dly, who performs great and wonderful deeds during his stay upon this earth. Now, let us see whether, according to this triple standard, the Church or the world has produced the greater heroes.

And first, with regard to the mark of lofty views and sublime conceptions—what are the views and conceptions of the worldly great? What is the proudest ambition of the world's heroes? The noblest, if indeed it be noble, which any seek, is to enjoy power and fame during life, and to have their memories honored by a long posterity. That power and fame they strive for, some by force of arms—by desolating whole countries, and destroying innocent people; by acquiring vast dominions, and accumulating countless treasures—by robbing and reducing to slavery millions of their fellow-men: contented themselves to die in the very summer-time of life, provided it be in the noontide of their glory. The readers of the world's history admire the grand conceptions of an Alexander, and the lofty ambition that impelled him to lay one world waste, and sigh for another which he might conquer. What, though he was struck down by death, in the very bloom of his manhood, and wrenched, like a sapling, forever from the earth! Fame swells her canticles to a Cæsar, in the insolence of his pride, traversing Europe like a destroying angel, bringing home to grace the capital of the world the richest spoils of kingdoms! What, though as the imperial diadem was about to settle on his forehead, he was slaughtered, even by his friends, on the very spot from which he aspired to rule the nations of the earth! But there is a greatness of conception praised by worldlings, besides that of warriors. They laud the aspiring genius of the scientific philosopher, whose inquisitive mind at one time pierces the depths of the earth, and at another presumes to describe the motions and properties of the stars of heaven; though, at the end of a long and studious life, this profound thinker confesses himself a very child on the ocean-shore of knowledge; and though his midnight and solitary lucubrations had only for their end the acquisition of a name to be transmitted to posterity! The statesman's ambition is for the power to rule the minds and control the actions of his fellow-men—but his passion is not for the welfare of mankind, but for the aggrandizement of self. The philanthropist loves his kind, but, alas! his motives are not pure; philanthropy is the false coin of charity; self-love is at the bottom of his devotions; were he disinterested he would be a saint; but vanity is his besetting sin; he must be content with the vain homage of a sinful world. Come forth, ye Saints of God, and let us see how stand your sublime views, compared with the views of the great ones of the world: ye warriors, who would usurp the dominion and sway of nations, alas! how wretched your ambition! The Saints despised the world; they would not have accepted the sceptre of all the united kingdoms of the earth; for they knew too well how transient was the splendor, how false the grandeur, how unreal the happiness of the despot! What you sighed for, as grand and glorious, they disregarded as mean and contemptible. Here below they saw only sorrow and tears, perpetual change, and perishable goods; their thoughts were for a land of joy and gladness, a land of eternal beauty; their aspirations were for thee of which such "glorious things are said, oh! City of God!" and there they reign, and shall reign forever; while you, unhappy wretches, contented to bask for an hour in the glare of your own self-complacency, are excluded forever from power, from kingdom, and from glory. What if posterity honor your memory—if columns defying time proclaim your greatness—if the poet, the painter, the sculptor, transmit through ages the lineaments of your countenances, and the magnificence of your conceptions! your eyes are not pleased, for they are now sightless, and mingled with the dust; the chant of their praises can give no joy to your ears, for, alas! no sound can echo through the silent chambers of the grave.

The great thinkers and philosophers of this world have racked their brains to discover the nature of the Deity—of the universe—of man—of the dim past, and the still more mysterious future. When not submitting to Revelation, into what extravagances have they roamed; what various theories have they not broached; how many strange systems have they not formed! Some have limited the power even of the Omnipotent! Some have denied His being altogether; some believed in nothing. All this has been only an attempt, by reasoning, to disprove the existence of an avenging God, and to clear the road for a free indulgence of the passions, by removing the apprehension of punishment. Where here is sublimity of conception? While your philosophers have denied that the body, once corrupted in the grave, could ever rise to immortality! while they thus consoled themselves with the horrible solace of annihilation, the Saints, confiding in the Almighty power of God, and in the inexhaustible merits of His Divine Son, knew that, as with the grains of seed placed in the earth, corruption must precede incorruption; and instead of looking forward to annihilation as their hope, their language and their aspirations were those of the holy patriarch Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; when I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. This hope is laid up in my bosom."

The highest ambition, then, of worldlings, is altogether confined to earth—to live as long as possible—to enjoy the world's goods in profusion—to have power, honor, and fame, to be praised by their fellowmen during life—then to die, and to be spoken of in terms of approbation, through all posterity. But the ambition of the Saints is to live as long as God wills—to take the world's goods in stint or abundance, as it pleases the Great Giver—to have the power to thank and praise Him—the honor to be His servant—no fame, no praise; for these belong to God—then to die, and to be happy with that God, for all eternity. The world shall have passed away, and all its glory—its great ones shall be forgotten; they shall have had their reward—fame in the world through the centuries called time, which now appears as a speck on the horizon of eternity; while eternity itself stretches out before their vision—a shoreless ocean—an ocean of unfathomable blessings, where all is light and truth, and knowledge, and peace, and joy forever. Then let it not be said that the Saints lacked the character of lofty ambition, to prove their greatness above the greatness of the world.

II. But let us see whether, on the second ground, namely, indomitable courage, they can equally claim superior admiration. I do not speak of that courage which is displayed on the field of battle—for that, after all, is a vulgar courage, often evoked by the excitement of the hour, by the apprehension of disgrace, by the stimulus of common example—in fact a courage which is, so to speak, professional, the result of teaching and practice. Nevertheless, even in this aspect of courage, the Saints may compete with the bravest of the brave. Who so intrepid in war as Josue, Gideon, David, and the valiant Machabees, who shed their blood to the last drop for their country and their religion. In the new dispensation, the soldiers of Christ have accomplished more peaceful victories, for such was the desire of their Master, the Prince of Peace. Yet, when need demanded it, a sainted Monarch of France, King Louis IX., donned his armor against the infidels, and set as brilliant an example of courage and generalship to warriors as he did of humility and fervor to the children of the Church.

The world, prone to things of earth, is unwilling to try the combat for eternal life, and denounces those who have the courage to attempt it as fools and cowards. And yet we are assured by God that the "Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence, and the violent bear it away." To be violent we must be courageous, and such were the Saints. They had the courage to sell their possessions, if they had them, like Francis of Assisi, and give all to the poor for the sake of God—they emptied themselves for their Master's sake, as He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave for them. They left their palatial halls, their high-born associates, their sumptuous banquets, for rocks and caves, and howling wildernesses, for the company of wild beasts, for the scanty fare of the desert, the water from the stream, and the berries from the bramble. They did it for God. Ah! that was courage, while cowardice fled to the great ones of the world, who gratified every passion of nature, and satiated every corrupt appetite of the flesh. But there is a courage still greater than this, and yet which is despised by the world as pusillanimity. It is the courage by which a man bows submissively to insult and vituperation, fearless of the taunts and reproaches of his fellow-man: the courage by which one bears the yoke of Christ, humbles himself under the chastening hand of God, is calumniated and repines not—is mocked, and smiles complacently on the mocker. Such, too, was the courage of the Saints; they despised the taunts, as they contemned the applause of the world. They followed the dictates of their own consciences, careless of the world's verdict, knowing it was the Lord who should judge them. Behold the Apostles of Christ, who, when they were scourged before a Council of the Jews, "went from the presence of the Council rejoicing, because they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus." Saul of Tarsus knew not this magnanimity, in the days of his worldly greatness: but Paul, the converted, becomes the humblest, and thus the bravest of men. "We are made a spectacle," he says of himself, "to the world, to angels, and to men." "We have become the refuse of this world—the offscouring of all men until now." This is a courage of which the world can form no conception, and which it therefore pretends to despise; a courage which springs from a thorough knowledge of what is truly great and noble, which has triumphed over the contemptible meanness of corrupt nature, and trampled on human pride by the power of Him whose choicest glories are the glories of the Cross.

But we will be told that many great men, and even women, of this world have shown great fortitude in the hour of danger, and have evinced a degree of magnanimity under the most trying circumstances, such as demands our highest admiration and esteem. Be it so. But will that detract from the fortitude and magnanimity of the Saints? What then of the countless martyrs who have shed their blood for Christ in every age, in every clime; at every period of life, whether in the spring-time of youth, budding with hopes of a long and happy career in this world, or in the decrepitude of age, when the body most recoils from pain? What of the tender virgins, armed in constancy beyond their age or sex, who, for the preservation of their virtue, have been racked and tortured, flung to be devoured by wild beasts, cast into boiling cauldrons, or drowned in the rivers by whose banks they learned the beauty of their God, for whom they became victims? What of the youths who have been made the sport of amphitheatres, slain by the sword, or torn to pieces by lions, because they would not bend the knee to Baal? What of the daring missionaries who travelled through regions where man was even wilder than the brute, that they might bring the light of the Gospel to "nations sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," and who have succumbed, with smiles upon their cheeks, to the cruel death which they knew to be inevitable? Ah! talk as you please of indomitable courage, but look for its highest manifestation in the blood-red pages of the Christian Martyrology. There, if courage be a test of greatness, in common justice award the palm to the Saints of God.

We now come to the third and last test of human greatness—the performance of wondrous deeds and heroic exploits; and, according to this standard, I contend for the superiority of the Saints over worldlings, no matter how distinguished. In what have men evinced peculiar greatness above their fellows? History supplies us with the names of great lawgivers, poets, orators, philosophers, conquerors, philanthropists, and civilizers. In all these departments the Saints have shown most conspicuous. Where are your Solons and Lycurguses, and their ephemeral statutes, when compared with Moses and his laws, which still subsist after three thousand years, among a people to whom they were given to an unlimited duration, and whom, by some mysterious efficacv, they band together, though scattered over the nations of the earth, blended with their fellow-men, but marked out from them by a distinctive and unmistakable character? Amongst the poets of ancient or modern times, who has surpassed the sublimity of the Psalmist—the pathos of Jeremias—the terrific majesty of Isaiah? Other poets have sipped of the stream—those have drunk at the very fountain of Divine inspiration. In oratory, who so magnificent as Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, and Chrysostom the golden-mouthed? Philosophers of Greece and Rome, behold your absurd creeds, and theories, and maxims, vanishing like pestilential vapors before the morning light of the Sermon on the Mount, and the maxims of the Crucified. Philosophers of modern times, you would bring men down to earth, to hell; the philosophy of the Saints, with unvarying wisdom, bears men up to heaven. Conquerors, what are your victories compared with the peaceful triumphs of the Saints? You ravaged countries with fire and sword, and added new dominions to your empires, which, in their turn, were desolated and appropriated by others. The twelve fishermen of Galilee, naked and unarmed, have changed the destinies of the whole world—have formed an universal society, acknowledging the same Head, obeying the same laws, working with a unanimity clearly supernatural, defying for the last eighteen hundred years, and sure to defy forever, the powers of earth and hell, enemies from within, and enemies from without, and all that by moral force. Oh, marvel of marvels! philanthropists, amongst your beneficent ranks where can be found one Vincent de Paul? Once a slave, then an humble priest in a Parisian hospital, poor and unknown—behold the wonders he wrought. He filled all France with innumerable asylums for the sick and poor; he dispensed millions of money in charity all over the world; he established seminaries for education; he controlled the councils of the kingdom; he established the Sisters of Charity—those angels of love upon earth; he diffused more blessings amonst mankind, and established agencies which dispensed them still more abundantly, than any thousand of your so-called philanthropists that ever lived upon the earth. The Saints, in fine, have been the only great civilizers of the human race; they banished the ignorance and superstition of paganism; they dethroned the false gods; they softened manners; they preserved and diffused the treasures of learning; they cultivated the arts and sciences; they founded universities; they erected temples for Divine worship, such as the world had never seen. Their energies permeated into the humblest hamlets, and towns, and rural districts; they have taught mankind true happiness, and pointed out the only means by which it was attainable; they have met in return only with contempt and ingratitude; but they have gone on rejoicing, never flinching, preaching "in season and out of season," ready to bear all for Him whom they serve, provided they can only add new voices to the celestial choir to sing His glories for eternity.

Then, whether we weigh the greatness of man by sublimity of conception, by indomitable courage, or by wondrous deeds, clearly the Saints of God alone have been truly great.

Yes, and when this world shall have been destroyed by fire, and all its glories vanished, then will that greatness be made manifest to all mankind. Then, say the Sacred Scriptures, "the just shall stand with great constancy against those who afflicted them." And when the sentence of eternal happiness shall have been passed, the wicked shall exclaim, "These are they whom we held some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach we fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints; therefore we have erred."

My brethren, need I add another word? Will you imitate the Saints of God, and be numbered hereafter among His children; or will you hold them in derision, and for a parable of reproach, and find, too late, that you have erred? You are not expected to rival the Saints, for all soldiers cannot be heroes in the battle for eternal life; but, like them, you can, at least, have your views fixed, not on this earth, but on the things of heaven. You can evince at least that courage by which the world, the flesh, and the devil are conquered and put to flight. Your deeds may not be of the highest order of valor, but they can be works fruitful of eternal life. Imitate the Saints of God, even at a distance, and you will do all that God requires at your hands. Above all things, learn, like them, to despise the world, to rise superior to its false maxims, to act according to the safe and unerring standard of conscience, to be proud of the name of Christian, never to disgrace so noble a dignity: that thus you may be worthy hereafter to join the white-robed band that "stand before the Throne of God," where there "shall be no more hunger nor thirst; neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the Fountains of the Waters of Life," whereby they shall be refreshed and inebriated with delight, through all the ages of eternity.

SERMON ON THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

"What is man, O Lord, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou shouldst visit him?"—PSALM viii. 5.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—We are assembled here this evening for the purpose of participating in a devotion most pleasing to God, and most beneficial to our own souls. We are met, with Him in our midst, as truly as He was in the midst of His Apostles at His Last Supper, to adore, and praise, and return Him thanks for the institution of a Sacrament which, of all others, nay, which, before all His works, proclaims His infinite love for us. We are met to atone, by our heartfelt homage, for the insults offered to Him in this most adorable Sacrament, either by ourselves or our fellow-creatures, and to declare to Him our fixed resolution henceforward to return love for love, and to die rather than renew one pang of that Sacred Heart, which has already endured so much for sinful, ungrateful man.

My brethren, it is much, very much to be deplored, that we all love God so little, and that, perhaps, there are some of us who do not love Him at all. We generally love those who love us; it is an instinct of our nature; but, although God's love for us is boundless, yet we offend Him much more than we offend even the humblest of His creatures. There is a sort of wantonness in our insults to God, which is not found in our insults to man. Few men insult others without some provocation, without, at least, some show of justification; and if one man knows that another loves him, he will overlook a thousand provocations rather than their friendship should be ruptured; but, alas! although God gives us no provocation, although He loves us as man can never love his fellow-man, yet, even the best of us, at times, offend Him, almost without temptation, through sheer wantonness—with an utter carelessness as to whether we offend Him or not; we forget His love for us, for a petty, trifling pleasure, for a wounded feeling, for a childish pride, for the possession of the merest bauble; we offer to His Eternal, adorable Majesty an insult which would be sufficient to bring Jesus again from heaven, and to enact once more the tragic horrors of Calvary! Oh! can it be possible that we understand how God loves us, when we offend Him so? Can our ingratitude be so black that we wantonly wring with sorrow that heart which, from the very dawn of eternity, has throbbed with tenderest love for us? My brethren, it cannot be! We must not comprehend God's love for us, else we would manifest toward Him that respect which we do not deny to the humblest of His creatures—the respect which prompts us to abstain from insulting them, without, at least, some pretext or shadow of provocation.

Let us, therefore, now, at least, consider well the great, the profound love of God for us, only as manifested in the institution of the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, that we may form a just conception of the injury we have done Him by our former insults, and that we may resolve, at length, never, never more to offend Him, but to give Him, at least, a small tribute of our love, in return for the unbounded love which He has here manifested toward us.

And, indeed, in considering the love of our Divine Redeemer, as shown to us in this Sacrament, it is so vast, so profound, so much beyond the ken of man, that in the contemplation of it we become lost in amazement, and utterly fail to comprehend it.

Whether we consider the circumstances under which it was established, the nature of the boon, or the immense disparity that exists between the Giver and receiver, we are equally at a loss to comprehend the magnificence of the gift, and the love of the Great Being who has bestowed it. But let us do the best we can; if we cannot understand it all, let us conceive it as far as our capacity admits. Let us satisfy ourselves that God's love for us has no bounds, that the perception of it fills our minds to overflowing, and that it is so vast that God Himself alone can weigh it in the infinitude of His comprehension.

To understand it well, it is necessary that we should proceed to the supper-room at Jerusalem, and there behold our Divine Redeemer performing this great, this adorable mystery of His love for man. "Before the festival day of the Pasch," says St. John, "Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He is, therefore, about to manifest His love in some very striking manner to His Apostles, and through them to all mankind. It is the night, of all others, when the tenderness of His whole nature, human and Divine, was to be evoked, when, like the boundless ocean that surrounds the earth, it was to flow into every channel of universal humanity, without diminishing its own vast immensity. It was the night when He was to take a last farewell of those twelve chosen loved ones of His heart; when the pangs of anticipated parting quickened into a livelier life that love which He never ceased to cherish for them; it was the night when one might suppose every sensation of His mind to be absorbed with the contemplation of the frightful agonies through which He was to pass—the night of His Passion; the night when He was to feel the lonely horrors of Gethsemani when the agony of His soul was to force the blood from every pore of His Body, in the garden of Olives; when the three chosen companions of His night-journey, oblivious of His woes, were to abandon Him in the unconsciousness of slumber; when one of the chosen twelve was to betray Him to the enemy; when He was to be buffeted and spat upon in Caiphas' Hall; when all the Apostles were to fly from Him in fear and shame; when the Shepherd was to be struck, and the sheep to be dispersed; when Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, was to swear that he never knew Him. Oh! such was the occasion, of all others, selected for the institution of this, the richest, the most exalted, the most enduring mystery of Jesus' love for man!

Behold Him thus, seated in the midst of His chosen twelve—it is His last meeting with them before His death. He is about to deliver to them a long discourse, which is related to us in full by the Evangelist St. John, and which, for tenderness and love, surpasses all the discourses ever delivered even by the God of Love. He is about to make His last will and testament, and the fishermen of Galilee are to be not only the inheritors, but the executors of all the treasures of His love. He is about to leave them a legacy—a legacy worthy of a testator whose power, and goodness, and love, are infinite and eternal—a legacy worthy of Him of whom it was said, that "His delights were to be with the children of men"—who was to remain with us all days, even to the consummation of the world—"who, having loved His own, who were in the world, loved them even unto the end." And what was this legacy to be? Was He to send down from the heights of heaven one of those bright archangels who worship before His Eternal Throne, to bless the earth by his perpetual presence, and cheer poor fallen man with the sight of a glory himself might attain? This would indeed be an admirable instance of His love. But the gift was to be something greater still. Was He to come and dwell in spirit, in some manner more marked than His omnipotence allows, enshrined in some sanctuary, whither His votaries might flock from the ends of the earth, to adore within a short distance of the Deity Himself? Oh! much more than this. But let us hear His own Divine words. Let us fancy that we are seated round that supper-table, and that these words are addressed to us, as they were addressed to the Apostles: "And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blest, and brake, and gave to His disciples, saying—Take ye and eat, this is my body; and, taking the chalice He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying—Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins." Ah! here is the great secret of Jesus' love. He is God, and His gifts must be Godlike. All things outside God are small—infinitely small in comparison to Him. His last legacy must be nothing insignificant—nothing unworthy of a God. What shall He give, then, worthy of a God, unless He give Himself? Yes, Himself it must be. "Take ye and eat, this is my body; drink ye all of this, for this is my blood." Oh! Lord, is it not enough that for the love of us Thy adorable blood has empurpled the pillars in the Hall of Pilate—that it is destined to bedew the grass in the Garden of Gethsemani—that it must ebb to the last drop from the gaping wounds upon the cruel cross on Calvary? Is that not enough? but must Thou also decree that the children of men, sinners though they be, shall possess Thy body and Thy blood forever, as the food and nourishment of their souls? So it is, my brethren; and oh! what tongue can describe, what language can paint, the excess of our Blessed Saviour's love in the institution of this most adorable mystery. So great is that love, that we seek but in vain to conceive it in thought, much less to describe it in words. The liveliest imagination cannot represent it to itself, and in the contemplation of its magnitude we can only give way to the feelings of wonder and amazement, which language altogether fails to depict.

If St. Paul, inspired as he was, could only describe the glory of heaven by saying that it was such as "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive," how can we, weak mortals, describe the love of God for man, as here evinced, better than by borrowing the language of the Apostle? For of that love it may indeed be said, that it is such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. For, as the great St. Augustine tells us, God has here exhausted His beneficence. All-powerful as He is, He could give us no more than He does when He gives us Himself: all rich as He is, what more valuable, what richer gift could He confer even on the most exalted of His creatures than Himself? By the fall of our first parents, my brethren, the most disastrous consequences were entailed on the human race—by that fatal sin we lost the vigor of our understandings, and the moral life of our souls. By eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, our first parents lost what they could never regain; their intellects were blinded—they became a prey to uncertainty and doubt, and this curse was entailed upon their posterity to the end of time. So much did they lose by partaking of the tree of knowledge. In punishment of their fall, they were driven away from that other tree which bloomed in the midst of Paradise, the tree of life, by partaking of which, they and we were to acquire perpetual virtue and a glorious immortality. This twofold want our blessed Saviour came on earth to remedy. A new tree of knowledge He planted on the top of mountains to which all the nations of the earth might recur in their difficulties and doubts—beneath whose shadow they might repose, by whose fruits they might be fed, by virtue whereof they might acquire the knowledge of Eternal Truth. That tree of knowledge is His Church; beside it He planted the new tree of life, the adorable Sacrament of His own Body and Blood, by partaking of which man's moral vitality is restored; by which virtue is augmented, grace infused, faith strengthened, hope cherished, and charity inflamed; by which the soul is nourished and fed, lifted up from its prostrations, comforted, consoled, admitted to the friendship of God, and conducted to eternal life. In the old law, when the people partook of the flesh of the victims offered to God, they congratulated themselves that thus they were committed to a close communion with the Deity Himself—that they, as it were, sat at one table with Him and shared His hospitality; but in the new law what a glorious realization invests that fancy of the old; for, now we partake of a Victim which not only admits us to a communion with the Deity, but unites and incorporates us with God; makes us one with Him, and Him with us; makes us, as St. Peter says, "partakers of the Divine nature"; for, by eating this bread, God abides in us and we in Him—not for a time, but for eternity; for, says Christ, "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead: he who eats this bread shall live forever."

In Paradise God appeared visibly to our first parents, and walked with them through that blessed region of delights. Oh! what an inestimable favor was that. But to us God not only appears in person, not only keeps our company, but enters into our very hearts, where He reposes as on a throne, fills the soul with sweetest joy and consolation, inspires holy thoughts that elevate us above this sinful earth, and gives us even here below a view into that heaven of endless, boundless joy which He has prepared for those who love Him. Oh! you who often approach the Holy Table with sentiments of piety and love, tell me, could all the real or even imaginary pleasures of the world afford you any joy like the joy of receiving your Lord? And oh! you who have fallen away from innocence, who have "forsaken the right ways and gone into the crooked ways," if ever your minds, wearied with the distractions and cares of sin and worldliness, wander back to the days of vanished youth and forsaken virtue, tell me, oh! tell me, have you ever experienced any pleasure so pure, so real, so entrancing as that which you felt on those happy mornings when in the spring-time of your youth, and the fervor of your zeal, you received at the altar the Body of your Lord? Does not the memory of those happy days come back upon your sin-enslaved souls, as the dreams of his lost native land come back at night upon the exile, unfountaining the bitter tears of regretful sorrow, and awakening feelings akin to those which touched the hearts of the captive daughters of Jerusalem, when, in the gloom of their bondage, by the rivers of Babylon, they sat, and wept, and remembered the enchanting songs of Sion? And, oh! on that night of sorrows when our Blessed Saviour invented this mystery of love, He thought, no doubt, of our forlorn condition in this miserable world, this sad, sad scene of our pilgrimage to the other; He knew how much we needed a guide, a consoler, and a friend; and such was His love for us that He resolved that guide, consoler, and friend should be no other than Himself. He thought of the weary days of our lonely exile; how, wandering through this valley of tears, our souls should sigh with their heaven-born instinct for the good things of Sion; how, sick and faint, we should totter on the way unless refreshed with the manna of life, not with "the food that perisheth"; and thus He bequeathed to us that bread which angels dare not taste, to strengthen us in our journey to the land where we expect—let us hope not in vain—to be filled for eternity with the plenty of His Father's House.

And, can it be possible, my brethren, that any human being, any Christian, any one so favored by God as to be the inheritor of such deep, such inexhaustible love, could repay that love by insulting the very God who has so marvellously enriched him? Can it be possible that any one would wantonly receive into a bosom defiled with mortal sin the gracious Lord of heaven and earth? Can it be possible that any one of us has ever been guilty of so black a crime? Oh! let us hope that such is not the case; but should it be so, let us reflect on the baseness of our ingratitude, on the atrocity of the sacrilege we have committed. Let us tremble at the fate of Judas, who received the body of his Lord while his soul rankled with the guilt of treason; let us weigh well the terrible words of St. Paul, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord": that is, he shall be guilty of Deicide, of putting God to death; he shall repeat the crime of Calvary; nay, his guilt shall be far blacker and more hideous than the guilt of the Jews who crucified our Lord; for, as we are assured by St. Paul, if the Jews had known the Lord of Glory, they would not have crucified Him. They imagined that Jesus was only the Son of Joseph and Mary; that He was a seducer of the people, and an enemy to the law of Moses. But it is not so with the unworthy communicant; he believes that Jesus is the Messiah—he beholds Him with the eyes of faith really present on our altars—he acknowledges Him to be the Lord of Glory, the Son of the Most High, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; and yet, with a full consciousness of his own crimes, he dares to insult the Majesty of God, and condemns Him to a far more disgraceful death in his breast than that which He endured upon the cross.

The executioners who put our Lord to death were called the ministers of God's justice; they were the instruments by which our Lord effected His resolution of offering Himself in sacrifice to His Eternal Father—a resolution He formed at the first moment of His conception. They seemed to take part with God in carrying out the work of our redemption; they lifted their hands against the Holy One, when every hand was to be lifted against Him. But the unworthy communicant accomplishes no designs of the Almighty. On the contrary, he dishonors the Son, while the Father is glorifying Him. No one unites with Him in the sacrifice—he is not an instrument in the hands of God; he is himself the plotter, the executioner; heaven and earth look with horror on his crime, and the whole guilt of the innocent blood of the Lamb falls on him alone.

We do not find, my brethren, that any of those of whom it is recorded in the Gospel that they received any special mark of our Blessed Saviour's regard, had any hand, act, or part in His execution. From that tragic scene we miss the lame whom He healed, the blind whom He restored to sight, the leper whom He cleansed, the dead whom He brought back to life. Alas! what a contrast does their absence from Calvary afford to the black ingratitude of the unworthy communicant! He was blind, but he was restored to sight—he was struck with the leprosy of sin, but he was cleansed by the beneficent voice of Jesus—he was dead, but Jesus restored him to life. Had this crime been committed by a pagan or an infidel, by one whose soul never basked in the sunshine of the Gospel-light—had never been enriched with the thousand graces imparted only to the Christian, his audacity would not excite our astonishment so much; but that a child of God, an heir of heaven, a friend, a brother, should lift his consecrated hand to fling the Lord from His throne of glory! oh! this is ingratitude indeed! Our Lord Himself, mild and gentle, and forgiving as He is, cannot restrain His indignation with the perpetrator of such treason: "If my enemy," says He, "if my enemy had insulted me, I would verily have borne with it, but thou, the man of my peace, my guide, my familiar, who didst walk with me in concert in the house of God." Truly, my brethren, the magnitude of the crime is beyond description. The very executioners who nailed our Blessed Saviour to the cross seemed somewhat excusable for their ignorance. For this reason the gentle Victim of their fury pleads with His Heavenly Father for their forgiveness: "Father," He says, "forgive them, for they know not what they do." But He cannot witness the profanations of His altar by those who are not ignorant, without denouncing the heinousness of their guilt, and proclaiming to them the eternal vengeance which awaits it.

"Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat that bread and drink of the chalice; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."

Oh! then, my brethren, let me entreat of you this night, if ever you have been guilty of the monstrous crime of receiving your Lord unworthily, to ask His pardon before you leave His blessed presence on the altar. His love for you hath no end, and His mercy endureth forever. It is possible, nay, it is more than probable, that you have never been guilty of such wickedness; in that case, for yourselves you need no pardon; but oh! reflect how many unhappy Christians throughout the world have committed, and still commit this frightful iniquity; out of the superabundance of your love, make some reparation, some atonement, to the offended love of your Divine Redeemer. He stands there before you—so near, that you may behold and converse with Him like friends—so generous, that you may ask of Him what you please, and be sure to obtain it; so loving and tender that our bosoms may melt in the contemplation of His sweetness; and yet so exalted, so glorious, so powerful, that we may exhaust the language of praise and adoration, and still be at a loss for epithets worthy of His greatness! Nay, no longer seeking to dazzle us by His glory or affright us by His power, we behold Him divested of all the splendor, by which He thrills the heavens with delight. Let us approach Him with that spirit of faith and love, and adoration that filled the hearts of the Eastern Kings, when they knelt and poured their fragrant offerings in lavish profusion at His feet, as He lay a trembling infant, in the cold, dark stable of Bethlehem. Let us fling ourselves before Him, as Magdalen did, in the supper-room of Jerusalem, conscious of His boundless love. Whither shall we recur for sympathy or for support, if not to Him who has declared Himself the sweet, the tender physician of our souls? "Come," He says, "to me, all you who labor and are heavy burthened, and I will refresh you."

Oh! Jesus, God of love, "whose delight it is to be with the children of men," grant us the grace to love Thee with all our hearts; grant us henceforward to receive Thee into our bosoms with all the love Thy love deserves; that having tasted on earth and seen, how sweet is the Lord, we may be worthy to enjoy, in the kingdom of Thy glory, the inexhaustible sweetness of the everlasting banquet of Thy love. Amen.

SERMON ON THE WORD OF GOD.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed: and if any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulations, and to keep one's self unspotted from this world."—CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES, i. 22, etc.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—On that dreadful day, when we shall all appear before the tribunal of our Eternal Judge, we must render to Him a strict account, not only how often we have heard the Word of God preached to us, but how we have heard it, whether with cold indifference, or with zealous attention—whether we have done all the good which that Word inculcates, or avoided all the evil which that Word denounces. "We must be," in the language of the Apostle, "doers of the word, and not hearers only," deceiving ourselves.

The Word of God points out to us the road to our everlasting home. With our souls overshadowed by the heavy clouds of sin, we wander darkly, groping through this valley of tears, unconscious whither we go; but the Word of God, like some bright star in the firmament, lights the path before us; and if we lose its heavenly ray we are ourselves lost in the gloom, and become a prey to the roaring lion, who "goes about seeking whom he may devour." We are cast like some frail bark on the ocean of life, journeying on toward the wished-for haven of a happy eternity. We are tossed about by the billows of temptation, and driven back by the tempests of passion. The Word of God, like some benign beacon, shines out on the bosom of the deep, stretching out before us, by its reflection on the waters, a pathway of calm and silvery light, while all is dark around. If we turn away from that opening light, and seek some other course, alas! what fate can we expect but hopeless wandering, shipwreck, misery, and death? Each one of us is like a sick man laid upon his bed, writhing in the torture and agony brought upon him by that direful disease called sin. The minister of God, skilled in His Holy Word, stands by as a tender physician to administer the healing draught—to apply the soothing balsam. If we despise His counsel—if we reject His medicine, must we be surprised if we suffer all the agonies of terror and remorse, and die that eternal death from which God's Holy Word alone can save us?

And yet, my brethren, how many of us treat the Word of God with this unhappy indifference. We hear it often preached, and we close our ears to its most sweet sounds. We see it shining out before us, and yet we shut our eyes, and turn our backs upon its cheering rays. We know how effectually it can cure the infirmities of our souls, and yet we shun the soothing and the consolation which it imparts. We are like the man alluded to by the Apostle, "who beholds his own countenance in a glass, and going his way, presently forgets what manner of man he is." Remember the dreadful doom that God denounces upon those who reject and despise His Holy Word: "You have despised my counsel," He says, "and neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock you when that will come to you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand, when tribulations and distress shall come on you, then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find me, because they have hated instruction, and have not received the fear of the Lord." My brethren, in order that we may not receive this punishment at the hands of God, but rather that we may deserve the blessing promised to those who "hear the Word of God, and keep it," listen, I pray you, while I show you the sublime effects which the Word of God is capable of producing, while I explain the reasons why those effects are not invariably produced, and while I point out the disposition one should have, in order that those effects may, for the future, be produced in our souls.

And first, with regard to the sublime efficacy of God's Holy Word, consider the wonderful effects produced by it through the whole world, at the first dawn of Christianity. I will not speak of the enthusiasm with which it fired the multitudes of Judea, who heard it fall from the Divine lips of Jesus Himself. I will not describe to you how He was followed by thousands of men, forgetful of their homes, their occupations, and their physical wants, that they might hear those Divine words that fell softly and vivifyingly, as the dews of heaven, from His sacred lips. But what were the effects produced by it, when twelve illiterate fishermen preached it all over the world? When "their sound," as the Psalmist sings, "went forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Suddenly the darkness of Gentile ignorance and superstition was dispersed—the Sages and Philosophers of Greece and Rome, skilled in all the learning of the ancients, were confounded and ashamed; their sophisms were laid bare—their eloquence was outrivalled—the Truth burst, at length, upon their view—their idols tumble in the dust—their gods, theretofore the recipients of divine adoration, are now discovered to be the pure creations of fancy; the "Unknown God" becomes the real claimant for their homage and adoration; thousands are converted; from those altars whence ascended the smoke of profane sacrifices to Jupiter or Mars, now ascends the grateful incense of prayer to the throne of the Most High; and where the blood of sheep and oxen flowed in fruitless homage to deities who had no existence, there was offered up the pure sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus, the crucified, in propitiation for the sins of men. But, not only was the philosophy of the Pagans humbled and confuted by the Word of God, but all the political power of the princes and kings, by which it was sustained throughout the world, yielded to its influence, and disappeared before it. The process was slow, but it was sure. Rome was the most powerful city in the world, and nothing could equal the power and majesty of the Cæsars. They were, so to speak, the monarchs of the universe. We all know how they persecuted the Word of God, but we know how persistently the Word was preached, notwithstanding that unremitting persecution. God, however, remembered His promise: "Going, therefore, teach all nations, and, behold, I am with you." The pride of the Roman Emperors and their power gradually dwindled away; and at length, upon their imperial throne sat, and still, after the lapse of 1,800 years, sits the successor of St. Peter, wielding the sceptre of his spiritual authority, over an empire bounded only by the farthest limits of the universal world. Behold the wonderful effects produced by the preaching of God's Holy Word!

When we read the annals of the Christian Church, with what feelings of wonder and delight do we perceive the miraculous effects produced by the preaching of the Saints and Fathers throughout the entire fold of Christ! Those holy men, attired in poor and humble garb, perfectly destitute of worldly power and dignity, austere in their habits, unattractive in appearance, barren of all the graces of rhetoric—for the most part unskilled "in the persuasive words of human wisdom," preach Christ crucified throughout the world, in language simple and unadorned, but vehement and fervid. Thousands flock around them, chained, fascinated, as it were by some invisible power. They are chased by the persecutor from public places; they retire into caverns and solitudes, followed by eager multitudes of hearers; hundreds and thousands are converted and baptized; persecution haunts the increasing multitudes of Christians, but their conversion is sincere—their faith is unflinching—they are arraigned before the tribunals of the land, and, boldly professing the religion of Jesus, seal their faith with their blood, and are rewarded for their fidelity to Him with crowns of everlasting glory.

The Word of God, my brethren, is the same to-day that it was in the earliest days of the Christian Church; the same Gospel we preach to-day that St. Peter preached to the Jews more than 1,800 years ago, when by his two first sermons he converted 8,000 souls to the Lord. It is always the same—it is incapable of change. The Holy Catholic Church, guided by the Spirit of truth, preserves with jealous care the Holy Word of God in all its primitive purity, and hands it down from generation to generation, undefiled and uncorrupted as it was received from the mouths of Christ and His Apostles. Why it does not produce the same effects now as it did in the primitive days of Christianity, I will explain immediately. But we are, nevertheless, witnesses every day of its extraordinary efficacy and power. Do we not see hundreds of men, even Christian men, wandering away for years from the path of duty, forgetful of God and of futurity, wallowing in sin, the victims of passion, the slaves of Satan, scandals to the world, who, at some happy moment, touched by the grace of God, come to hear His Holy Word; their hearts are moved, they kneel before the minister of God, confess their sins, and live for the rest of their days in piety and penitence, loving and beloved by the Almighty. What is it that inspires us with a horror for sin, but the Holy Word of God? What fills us with apprehensions of judgment, death, and futurity, but the Word of God? What paints to us the glories of heaven, and fills us with joy? what presents to our souls the infinite mercies of God, and soothes and consoles us? what melts us to tears in considering the passion of the Lord? what nerves and encourages us to virtue in remembering the trials and triumphs of the Saints, but the Holy Word of God, preached by His minister in the simple eloquence of the Gospel, and heard with faith, with humility, and with zeal for the sanctification of our souls? In fine, what is it that, when the Christian lies upon his death-bed, and when he is about to close his eyes forever on the world, cheers and consoles him, alleviates his pain, nay, makes suffering sweet, bows down his soul with resignation, strengthens his faith, animates his hope, inflames his love for God? what is it that lights up a smile on his pale cheek, even while his bosom is rent with the quivering agonies of death, but the holy words of salvation distilled into his dying ear by the attendant minister of God—words which tell him that there is a world beyond the grave, where the throbbing heart shall rejoice with eternal jubilations in the bosom of the Almighty, and that pallid cheek bloom with perennial health in the sunshine of a blessed immortality?

Such, my brethren, are the sublime, the glorious effects which the Word of God is capable of producing in the souls of men. Let us now see why those effects are not invariably produced—why sermons are now preached, why the Gospel truths are now expounded as of old, and yet why no extraordinary conversions are wrought; but why, on the other hand, men leave the house of God barren as they entered it, unimpressed, uninstructed, unconsoled. The fault does not lie with the Word of God, for I have shown you what that Word is capable of doing. Where else then does the fault lie? It must be either with the preachers of the Word, or with the hearers of it. Is it the fault of the preachers? I will show you that it is not. Every preacher of God's Holy Word has Divine authority for preaching, "Going, therefore," said Christ to His Apostles, "teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." All lawfully appointed successors of the Apostles, therefore, to the end of the world, have not only God's authority for preaching, but they have His command, and the promise of His Divine assistance. They are all, however, differently endowed by Him with natural gifts and talents; some are eloquent, and some are not. Men cannot excel in all things, and he who excels in eloquence is often deficient of other qualities that have just as high a title to admiration. But, my brethren, every preacher preaches as best he can; and no matter in what uninteresting language his thoughts may be conveyed, the truths he speaks are the truths of the Gospel, and when closely examined will be found to be identical with those which have been decorated by the immortal eloquence of an Ambrose, or gilded by the golden periods of a Chrysostom. In fact, the mouth of the preacher is but the trumpet through which God proclaims to the world the Gospel truths: "It is not you," he says, "who speak, but the Spirit of my Father that speaketh in you." Such being the case, it is not the fault of the preacher that God's Holy Word does not invariably produce its effects in our souls. The fault must, therefore, be with the hearers of the Word, and so it is in point of fact.

What are the motives that, for the most part, induce men to come and hear the Word of God? Is it that they may learn—that they may be instructed in the truths of salvation; that they may be impressed with the enormity of sin, with the terrors of judgment, and excited to tears of penitential sorrow? Ah! no, far from it. They come to the House of God for a great variety of reasons. Some come that they may get over in some way the obligations of sanctifying the Sabbath day; others that they may see and be seen; some that they may attract the attention of their neighbors to the elegance of their persons, or the fashionableness of their attire; others that they may, as they say, kill time—for want of something else to do; they come, because if they remained away, as they would prefer, they would excite the attention, and call forth the unpleasant comments of their friends upon their indifference to the duties of religion; they come through an idle curiosity to hear some great preacher, to admire the eloquence of his style, the copiousness of his language, the graces of his gesture: as he gradually swells into some grand rhetorical flight they are filled with admiration—they exclaim to themselves, "How magnificent! how sublime! how beautiful!" but when he calmly expatiates on the enormity of sin, on the terrors of judgment, on the horrors of hell, their admiration is changed into indifference; they grow weary of those dull, commonplace exhortations to which they have so often listened before, and anxiously wait for the moment when the preacher shall leave these beaten paths, and lead them once more into the regions of fancy where no horrid phantoms are conjured up to strike terror or alarm, but where all is pleasing, beautiful, and gay. What is the consequence? They go away from the House of God, and take nothing with them: a hundred pious thoughts and reflections have been strewed before them in profusion, each more priceless than the gems and pearls so prized in this passing world, but they have not treasured up even one. They merely comment, ignorantly and arrogantly, on the sermon they have just heard; they praise or find fault as they have been pleased or disgusted; the invectives against vice in which the preacher indulged, they apply to every one but themselves. Grace has been offered to them and refused, spurned, and despised. Wretched men! while dwelling with shallow, vulgar criticisms on the defects, and ridiculing, as often happens, the tones and gestures of the preacher, they forget the words of Christ: "He who hears you, hears me, and he who despises you, despises me." They think not of the awful severity with which Christ denounces such sacrilegious conduct: "Into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words going forth, shake the dust from off your feet: Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that city."

What, therefore, are the dispositions that should animate you when you come to hear the Word of God? I will tell you. You must come to hear that Holy Word with faith, with humility, and with zeal for the sanctification of your souls. You must come with faith, believing that what you hear is not the word of man, but the Word of God. You must listen as if God Himself were speaking to you. "He who hears me, hears you." You must not consider who it is that speaks; you must ponder well on what you hear. The priests of the Church merely take the place of Christ Himself; they are, as St. Paul says, "the ministers and dispensers of His mysteries"; they are, as he says elsewhere, "the ambassadors of Christ." If you respect the ambassadors of a worldly king, how much more should you honor and respect the ambassadors of the King of kings and Lord of lords! You should hear the Word of God as St. Paul congratulates the Thessalonians on having heard it. "We give thanks," he says, "to God without ceasing, that when you received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it, not as the hearing of men, but as it is indeed the Word of God"; and it is to this lively faith that he attributes the diffusion of the Word throughout the early Church. "From you," he says, "was spread out the Word of the Lord, and in every place your faith is gone forth." It is for want of this faith that the Word of Christ made no impression on the stiff-necked Jews: "You hear not the Words of God," he says, "because you are not of God." "He that is of God heareth the Words of God. My sheep hear my voice." Imitate, therefore, my brethren, the faith of the Christians of the early Church; hear the Word of God as they heard it. Their faith overcame all obstacles; in mountain and desert they heard the Holy Word; in subterraneous caverns and dark dungeons they cherished the sacred seed of faith, which gradually grew up into a great tree, covering the world with its branches, and sheltering beneath its foliage the children of Christ from the storms of temptations, and the tempests of destruction.

The Word of God, in order to fructify in our souls, must be heard not only with faith, but also with humility. You must come to hear it with a thorough conviction of your own weakness and sinfulness. You must regard yourselves as prisoners arraigned before the tribunal of God, where all your vices, all your errors and weaknesses, are exposed, and where the judgments of God are denounced against you, in order that you may be humbled, confounded, and ashamed. Unless you bring this disposition of humility, your hearing of God's Word will be all in vain. Unless your souls are purified from the weeds and tares of pride, the Word of God, like the good seed, shall fall on an unfruitful soil, where it shall be choked up, and lost forever; and, what is worse, you shall be made accountable to God for having heard His Word, and for rejecting the means which it afforded you of eradicating your vices, and saving your immortal souls.

Finally, you must hear the Word of God with zeal for the sanctification of your souls. This is manifest, for, unless you sincerely desire to help out your own salvation, the Word of God will produce no effect on you. God is willing to assist us by His grace to save our souls; but He requires our co-operation in the great work. He who is cold and indifferent to his own salvation must not be surprised hereafter, if he finds that he is lost forever. It were far better never to hear the Word of God than hearing to despise it, and turn to our own destruction the very means devised by Almighty God for averting that dreadful doom.

Oh! then, my brethren, let me entreat you, whenever you hear the Word of God, to hear it as it ought to be heard—to remember that where His minister opens his mouth, you are about to hear, if not the very words, at least the very truths that God Himself would address to you, if He appeared before you in human form. Remember that every truth of the Gospel uttered for your edification is a special grace and gift destined by God for your sanctification, and that if you disregard it, you shall most assuredly render to Him a severe account for mercy despised and grace rejected.

If you hear His Holy Word with the dispositions I have pointed out —with faith, with humility, and with zeal for your own sanctification, you may rest assured that that Word will take deep root in your souls—that God will water it with His inspiration, and bedew it with His graces, so that it shall produce fruit a hundredfold unto life everlasting. "All things shall pass away," says Christ, "but my words shall not pass away." It is His Eternal Word that has said, "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keepeth it." Remember, therefore, and cherish well in your hearts the words of St. James, with which I opened, and with which I conclude this discourse: "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

SERMON ON FALSE CONFIDENCE.

"Why stand you here all the day idle?"—MATT. xx. 6.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—We were sent into this world for no other end than that we might labor in the vineyard of the Lord; that we might work for the promotion of His glory, and thus earn our eternal reward. Reason as you will on the condition of man; account as you please for his position in life; argue on the past, and conjecture on the future, as wisdom or fancy may suggest; at the end of all this intellectual struggle for truth, an inward voice ever rings out clear and convincing within your soul—you were placed in the world for no other object than that you might labor in the vineyard of the Lord. Everything proclaims it: the shortness of life; the vanity of earthly pursuits; the emptiness of human pleasures; the fate of millions who have lived since the world began, and of whom there is now no trace; their ambition thwarted; their hopes deceived; their schemes baffled; their theories disproved; God's Providence vindicated, and His Gospel taught and revered, unchanged and unchangeable, by the infallible Church, which ever reigns triumphant amid the ruins of man's works and speculations.

You believe in this high destiny of yours, otherwise you were not here to-day; your conscience has impelled you hither; that silent monitor, which ever whispers within you that you were sent to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. And yet, strange fatuity of man! unmoved by the conclusions of reason, and the dictates of religion; untaught by the experience of the past; and submitting to the delusion to which millions have fallen victims before you, you too postpone till to-morrow, till next year, till some indefinite period of your life, the hour of your conversion to God, as if time were your own, and you could command it; as if your Lord and Judge had never cried out, "Unless you do penance, you shall all perish." To-day He comes forth once more into the highway of life. He has called you at early morning; He has called you at the third hour, at the sixth, at the ninth; He now comes at the eleventh hour, and perhaps for the last time, with pity, with warning, but ever with plenteous mercy: He exclaims to you, "Why stand you here all the day idle?"

And why stand you idle? Because you have a false confidence in

God. Because you trust that, somehow or other, you will be saved. It is well then that we should see what kind of foundation for your eternal hopes this false confidence is. I will show you two features of this kind of confidence in God's goodness, which I trust will be sufficient to convince you how unreliable it is. I will show you how foolish it is, and how criminal. If you were convinced that you would be lost forever, oh! what would be the anguish of your mind. I will prove to you that the presumptuous sinner will be lost forever unless at the eleventh hour he enters and labors in the vineyard of the Lord. And just behold the folly of his presumption. The habitual sinner must live in the constant apprehension of being lost forever; for his sinfulness is certain, and his repentance is very uncertain. Without Divine grace he cannot be rescued from sin, and this grace he cannot give himself; it comes from God. Do you intend to die in your sins, or to abandon them? Alas! the former is much more likely to happen than the latter; it is so much easier. It requires no effort to remain in sin, you have only to let corrupt nature have its way, to yield to the impetuosity of your passions, and they will speedily bear you to destruction. You have only to let the poison of sin pass into your soul and kill it. You have not energy to apply an antidote, and your fate will be that of the wicked man described by Job: "His bones shall be filled up with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust." Thus to die in your sins is easy, but to rise from them requires a force from without, a supernatural force, which you cannot apply yourself, and which you can only obtain by flinging yourself at the feet of God and imploring it.

And it is by no ordinary grace that you can be rescued from your sinfulness, but by a singular, a miraculous intervention of Providence; by such a change as excites the surprise of all men, from its suddenness, and its wondrous working: for, remember that the conversion of a hardened sinner is a prodigy of Divine grace, the examples of which are very rare in the world. Who can promise himself the good fortune of a Magdalen, or a penitent thief? We hear of souls from time to time turning themselves to God; we hear that such and such a sinner has been converted; but alas! how seldom. If God should act according to the ordinary laws of grace, which He has established, you perish: if you are saved from the slough of sin, it must be by some special interposition of His unspeakable mercy. Again, you who persist in sin paralyze the action of God's grace. You wait for God to convert you? You always hope for the coming of this inward change of soul, by which you are to turn to God. And how do you adapt your soul for this salutary change? By placing fresh obstacles in the way of God. How can you expect God to give you His healing grace, if you constantly oppose Him? If you seek the danger every day, every hour of your life, how can you hope that God will deliver you, in spite of yourself? God is ever willing to give grace, but He requires your co-operation. How can a man who is drowning be saved, if, instead of helping his rescue by another, he does all in his power to resist him in his benevolent attempt? The foolish virgins were excluded, because they showed no anxiety to meet their Lord when He would come; they neglected to trim their lamps, and to watch: they fell asleep —they were indifferent—and so, when the bridegroom came, they cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But He answering said, "Amen, I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore," says Christ, "for ye know not the day or the hour." Do not deceive yourself, O sinner, for the grace of God will not always come of its own accord. Years ago, when you were lost in a vortex of passions, you trusted that the heavenly gift would come at last and save you. Has it come yet? Has the world lost its charms for you? Have your passions cooled down? Are you a better man or woman to-day, than you were ten years ago? I fear not; and yet you still hope for the coming of this peaceful day. Alas! the delights of sin will be forgotten; and you will start fresh on the road to Heaven, in the serene sunshine of a soul from which the clouds of temptation will have passed away. Delusive hope! Know you not, that to the sinner grace will not come without tears, and ceaseless importunity—without longing desire and earnest entreaty? Do you ever pray for the grace of conversion? Do you ever ask of God to change your heart? Do you seek to propitate Him with alms-deeds and good works? Do you ever really and sincerely desire to be converted to the Lord—to enter His vineyard, and work for Him? On the contrary, does not your conscience every day upbraid you with standing idle in the market-place, frittering away precious hours in the pursuit of toys and vanities, which were intended by your Creator to be spent in working for His glory, and your own eternal salvation?

One of the greatest of all graces is the grace of conversion; and yet, this is the grace you expect God, out of His pure bounty, to give you; although you are every day making yourselves more and more unworthy of it. You are unworthy of it because you persist in sin—because you abuse the lights and inspirations which God is every day shedding over your soul. You despise the instructions, the warnings, the threats, the allurements, the thousand artifices, so to speak, by which He seeks to win you from the love of passing things, to the love of Him who alone is beautiful, good, unchanging, and Eternal. You are unworthy of the grace of conversion, because you neglect to have recourse to those means by which grace is imparted to the soul. Where is your respect for the Sacraments of Christ? Do you not rush from them as if they were engines of destruction, instead of being mediums of salvation? Is not the bare mention of them, at times, unpleasant, perhaps disgusting, to you? Do you not seek to change the subject to some topic more agreeable to the ears of one whose only pleasure is beneath the sun, and not beyond it? You are unworthy of God's grace; because you deride and mock those who are pious and godly. You are unworthy of it, because you repose, in a profound ease and security of soul, heedless of God, of His admonitions and judgments, of His goodness, His mercy, and His love; thus turning your conduct into perpetual insult to His Almighty Providence! and yet, you are the person who expects that God is to work one of His greatest miracles for you—to grant you the grace of being converted—while you are doing all in your power, while you employ every energy of your mind and body—while you turn every moment of your time to place obstacles in His path, to rouse His wrath, and provoke His vengeance on your unhappy head. Truly, then, is this presumption, this false confidence in God's goodness, a folly!

But let us see, for a moment, the pretexts by which a sinner defends his persistence in iniquity. Age, he says, will blunt my passions; they cannot be always thus violent; the maddest fire must burn out at last. Let us grant it. But, are you so sure that, when your passions have disappeared, repentance will come for the past? Does it follow, that, if a man can no longer sin, he grieves for having sinned before? No, for the truth is, that the desire to sin survives the capacity to commit it. A man may have a passion without being able to gratify it; and experience proves that the passions only grow stronger by age. Like old trees, they fix themselves year after year more firmly in the ground and cannot be uprooted, except with the ground itself. I speak not of the insult to God implied in the sinner's saying, I will turn to Thee, O God, when I can sin no more; I speak not of the folly of saying, I will be converted next year, or twenty years hence, when we cannot promise ourselves one hour, one second of existence.

The farther you keep from God, the more will He sunder Himself from you; He constantly invites you to come to Him, and you as constantly decline. What can you expect from Him, who has said, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay," but the punishment due to love despised, and favors only treated with ingratitude? Yes, and if terror has still any influence left on your heart, hear what the wise man proclaims, and tremble: "I called," saith the Lord, "and you refused; you have despised all my counsel, and have rejected my reprehension. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock, when that shall come upon you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand; when tribulation and distress shall come upon you, then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning and shall not find me; because they have hated instruction, and received not the fear of the Lord." But you hear these threats with indifference, O sinner! these appalling words do not disturb the repose of your mind. Alas! this is your crowning misery, that every sting of conscience should be torn away by the friction of sin—that your soul, once keenly sensitive to remorse, should now after years become tranquil and imperturbable to all guilt and its attendant bitterness. This is the direst visitation God had in store for you, that you should deem a curse a blessing—that you should mistake a calm of conscience for innocence of life, nor dream that it is only the forerunner of that most frightful of tempests, the storm of God's inexorable and inextinguishable wrath. In delivering you over to this desolation of the reprobate, He inflicts the severest penalty of your guilt; He acts according to the extremest rigor of His justice; for if He ever again intended to visit you with His converting grace, it would be by exciting fear and uneasiness in your mind, that you might see your deplorable condition, and cry for mercy. But woe to Him who is familiar with sin, and a stranger to sorrow! Sorrow eternal is his doom.

False confidence in God is not only a folly—it is a crime. It is an insult to the wisdom, to the justice, to the mercy of God. It is an insult to His wisdom. For the sinner argues thus:—God is infinitely wise. He has established a system by which He acts toward man in a spirit of infinite wisdom. So far we agree with the sinner. But He goes farther. He says, justifying his sinfulness, God holds in His hands the hearts of men—He can change them in a moment at His pleasure; and so He can change mine. What tribute is this to the wisdom of God, which the sinner praises so much? Is it not rather an insult to the Divine wisdom? Is it not to say that God, although infinitely wise, acts blindly and without discernment? That He will save the presumptuous sinner, as well as the humble penitent? That He treats the just and the unjust with the same measure of His bounty? But the sinner insults not only the wisdom but the justice of God; he says—I was born with those weaknesses; they are inherent in my nature; other men are free from them, but I am their victim; God will have it so. My deplorable tendency to sin ought rather to excite God's pity than arm His wrath against me. This is a false reasoning, my brethren; God is not the cause of your corrupt nature. Sin is the cause of it—it sprung from the crime of Adam, and is fostered by your own self-indulgence. Again, whatever be the weakness of your nature, you are always master of your passions, otherwise God would doom you beforehand to inevitable destruction, which is inconsistent with the nature of Him who is infinitely just and good. And, if you are weak, God knows it, and rather than permit you to be lost, He is ready, when you ask Him, to fling around your soul a fortification of graces which all the forces of hell itself cannot undermine. But speak the truth, examine your soul, and be candid; are not these all flimsy excuses you make merely to compromise with your corrupt inclinations; is not the real secret that you love your passions, and that you will not part from them?

The sinner, in fine, insults the mercy of God. Nothing is so common as to hear men say, who are estranged from the ways of piety: "Oh! God is infinitely merciful; He does not will the death of a sinner!" But what does the sinner mean by this exclamation? What balm does he gather from it for his own soul? Does he mean that God never punishes crime? he will scarcely say that: that He never abandons the sinner. Did He not abandon Pharaoh? Did He not abandon Saul and Antiochus? Did He not abandon the impenitent thief while He saved the repentant? Will the sinner say that God will save the drunkard, the immoral man, the avaricious, the proud, and the blasphemer? We all know that nothing defiled can enter heaven; what consolation is this to the sinner? Let him then cease to insult the mercy of God, by saying that such as he can enjoy eternal joy hereafter. Let him rather tremble at the words of God, as recorded in His sacred writings—"add not sin to sin; and say not the mercy of the Lord is great. He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins, for mercy and wrath quickly come from Him, and His wrath looketh upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance He will destroy thee."

I have shown you, my brethren, the folly and criminality of the sinner, in presuming on the goodness of God. Will you any longer be guilty of this folly and this crime? Oh! do not delude yourself with the idea that you may be saved. Why should you leave to chance a matter in which all your happiness for eternity is concerned? You will not be saved without your own co-operation. You must begin the work, and God will perfect it. As you sow, you shall reap: "If you sow in corruption, you shall reap in corruption," saith the Apostle; but if you sow in tears, you shall reap in joy. Why should you put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day? There is no to-morrow for a Christian. "Thou fool, perhaps this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Oh! if thou art to be lost hereafter, how amply will God be able to vindicate His conduct toward you. He will point to the Gospel of this day, and He will say to you, "I was the householder, who went out to hire thee into my vineyard. I went at early morning. In the dawn of thy life I sought hee in Baptism; I gave thee my grace. At the third hour when the light of reason beamed on thy soul, I called thee in the Sacrament of Penance. At the sixth hour I invited thee to the banquet of my love at the Holy Eucharist. At the ninth hour I confirmed thee in my grace and my love. But now I come at the eleventh hour, and I find thee here idle. I find with thee many who never heard my voice, or heeded it. Some, who refused my call at early morning, at the sixth and at the ninth hours; they are thy companions; and thou hast left my vineyard; thou hast obeyed the call and grown weary of the labor; why stand you here all the day idle?" Oh! sinner, if thou art lost, how amply, I repeat, will God's justice and goodness be vindicated by these words! Hear Him then even at the eleventh hour: "If this day you hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your hearts." "Seek ye the Lord," saith the prophet, "while He may be found; call upon him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way; and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He is bountiful to forgive." O good and merciful God, soften our hard hearts; illumine our darkened souls, that we may love Thee at length, who alone art worthy of our love; that we may no longer be dazzled by the false glare of worldly pleasure; but that we may see Thee as Thou really art, the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, and that shines on him for all eternity with the effulgence of glory never to be extinguished. Amen.

SERMON ON CHRISTIAN HOPE.

Gospel—The man cured of the palsy.—JOHN v.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—Beside the pond of Bethsaida, a multitude of men, sick, blind, lame, and withered, lay. They waited from day to day, from month to month, and some from year to year, for the periodical visit of the angel who should descend into the waters and impart to them the healing power. After various periods of ardent hope and bitter disappointment, some were cured, while others lingered on in their infirmity until life and health were scarcely worth recovery. Thus there were two classes of victims ever beside that mysterious pond. There were those who sighed for the coming of the angel, but for whom the angel never came. The angel did come; but while they were preparing to descend, some others were preferred before them, and their turn never arrived. How were the others more fortunate? Because they had some one to take them down to the pond just before the waters moved—because they were ever on the watch, and soliciting the aid of some kind friends against the hour of need; because their hopes of being cured were well founded, while others displayed a reckless indifference to securing the assistance of some bystander, an indifference which was all the more inconsistent, as they desired to be healed, but neglected the proper means of procuring their recovery. Is it not just so in life? in this world struck with a universal palsy of soul, where men lie sick, blind, lame, and withered in sin? Some victims hope, and their hopes are well grounded—they watch and pray; they set aside as far as possible all worldly cares; they think only of the one object—the moving of the waters of eternal life; they seek not to beguile the weary hours of waiting by frivolous pastimes on the bank; they make all things subserve to a state of preparation for a descent into the healing waters, and when the moment comes, when the Angel of Death arrives (for to the Christian, death is the passage of life), they go down into its saving depths, accompanied by their best friends—the good works which they have practiced during life, and pass into a new, happy, glorious, and eternal state of existence. But for very many of those palsied souls, although the light of their hope is never extinguished, and they go on from one period to another ever disappointed, yet ever still expecting the moment of saving immersion, their hope is vain, for it remains a barren, inactive hope; it does not take form, it does not look for help; in a word, it is not hope, but presumption; it is a foolish expectation of salvation without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

My brethren, I would speak to you of Christian hope, of that sublime virtue of the soul, by which man has ever a well-founded expectation of happiness boundless in extent and endless in duration; that aspiring elevation of the spirit, by which she mounts beyond this narrow world, and fixes her abode in the very bosom of her God: that free, expansive, agile gaze, by which she regards this paltry theatre of life as the passing pageant of an hour, and roams abroad in the contemplation of that interminable scene of future bliss, where the God of infinite beauty, and bounty, and love is, at the same time, the Giver and the Gift. I would speak to you of that hope that consoled the patriarchs of old, and all the just that lived from Adam to Christ, according to that of the Psalmist: "In thee, O Lord, have our fathers hoped—they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them; they cried to Thee, and they were saved; they trusted in Thee, and they were not confounded." I would speak to you of that hope which, in the early days of the Church—for the anchorites converted the desert into a blooming garden, and for the recluse made the cloister a palace of delights—that hope which adorned the sanctuary, and made the scaffold red with the blood of sainted victims; that hope which sustained a Monica in her prayers, a Jerome in his temptation, a Francis in his poverty, a Teresa in her sufferings, a Xavier in his labors—who, though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope was full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they were well rewarded. I would speak to you of that hope which is the refuge of the sinful, and the only consolation of the sorrowful, the companion of the desolate, the anchor of the just, the light which cheers and guides us on through the clouds and storms of life, and which is never obscured, until, having led us safely into the haven of salvation, it is transmuted into the light which beams upon the soul for eternity, from the joy-giving countenance of the Almighty.

We will embrace this whole question by considering briefly, yet attentively, three things—namely, what are the objects of our hope; what are the grounds of our hope; what should be the character of our hope—in other words, what do we hope; why do we hope; how should we hope?

And first—What do we hope? We always hope for something which we have not; the sick man hopes for health, the hungry man for food, the poor man for means to live, the ignorant man hopes for knowledge, and so on. By Christian hope we look forward for something which we want in a Christian point of view. There is no Christian who does not want something; and, therefore, there is no Christian who does not hope for something; if a Christian is in a state of sin, he wants grace, and, therefore, grace should be the object of his hope; for if he is in a state of grace, he wants perseverance, and, therefore, he should hope for perseverance. Sin and sorrow are the two great causes of want in this life; grace and joy are the two great objects of hope. Every one is a sinner—every one has some sorrow or another; the sinful Christian should hope for grace, the sorrowful Christian should hope for future joy. Now, if there were no hope for man, for sinful, for sorrowing man, how woeful would be his state! Estranged forever from God—banished from His sight, both for time and eternity. Cut off as a branch from the tree, he should rot and wither, and then be cast into eternal fire. The anticipation of that punishment here would render him forever miserable; for, surely, if anything assuages our sorrows in this life, it is the consoling hope that they cannot last forever, but must at some time give way to peace and joy. The condition of Cain was dreadful, unspeakably dreadful—he lost all hope; "My iniquity," said he, "is greater than that I should deserve pardon"; and "he went out from the face of the Lord, and dwelt as a fugitive on the earth"—the self-ejected wanderer, the despairing sinner, the irreclaimable child of sorrow. Such was Cain, and such should we all be if we had not hope.

But to us who are blessed with the possession of that Divine virtue, how different is the aspect of the future? If we fall into sin, we hope to rise from it again by the grace of God; if we relapse into sin, we hope still to rise once more; even if we spent a whole life in the transgression of God's commandments, not of course in a wilful presumption on His mercy, but yielding to the weakness of human nature, and beguiled by the deceits of the devil, we may still justly hope that God, whose mercy is boundless, will rescue us from ruin; if we are in sorrow and trouble, we hope that it may soon pass away; that even if it continued until the day of our death, it will then cease forever in that land "where weeping and sorrow shall be no more." The condition of those who hope not, then, is very miserable indeed, for they grope on in rayless darkness through "the night of time," to the endless night of a miserable eternity; or if they be the sceptic, infidel race, they see no God either here or hereafter, but believe, or persuade themselves they believe, that the moment of death is the moment of annihilation; that for them the sun of life goes down never to rise; that there is no existence beyond the grave. Oh! gloomy thought. While we, trusting that He who drew us from nothingness by His Almighty power, will preserve us by the same power, confiding in His love, in His mercy, in His truth, believe and hope that having here fulfilled His law we shall behold forever His infinite beauty and splendor, and shall share that infinity of happiness which He has in store for those who love and suffer for Him in this fleeting world.

But is this a vain hope, or is it well-grounded? We shall see:—The great ground of our hope is the infinite mercy of God; His infinite love for men. If there were limits to God's mercy, then indeed, like Cain, we might well despair, for perhaps our sins would be greater than that we should desire pardon; but of God's mercy there is no end. Were I to open the pages of the sacred volume, and produce before you the evidences of God's infinite mercy and love for man, I should read from the first word of Genesis to the last word of the Apocalypse, because it is all one history of God's mercy and God's love. I would show you how, when His loving designs with regard to man were frustrated by man's ingratitude, by Adam's sin, God's love suffered no abatement; but while in the spirit of His justice, He cast Adam out of the garden of pleasure, and doomed him and his posterity to temporal and eternal death, and yet in the sweet spirit of His boundless mercy He enkindled in the bosom of the outcast the serene light of hope by the promise of a Redeemer, whose blood should wash out the handwriting of sin: "I will put enmities," said He to the serpent, "between thy seed and her seed (that is, the woman's), she shall crush thy head." I would show you, how when Sodom and Gomorrah had provoked His wrath by the perpetration of nameless iniquities, He yet would have spared them from fire and brimstone, at the prayer of Abraham, if only ten just men could have been found within their walls. I should repeat for you the words which He uttered to Moses on the mountain, that He shows mercy to thousands of those that love Him and that keep His commandments. I would recite for you the Psalms of David, whose constant theme, through every varying form of praise, is the infinite mercy of our God, that mercy which is above all His works, that mercy which endureth forever. With him I would cry out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and never forget all He hath done for thee, who forgiveth all thy iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion: the Lord is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy: and as a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him: the mercy of the Lord is from eternity to eternity to them that fear Him." But why multiply proofs of what is so manifest—why direct your attention to any one particular passage for a proof of that mercy which breathes like a sweet incense from every page of God's sacred Word? Such is the mercy of the invisible God in the invisible world—let us see of what kind was His mercy when He dwelt amongst the children of men. In the fulness of time He came, in poverty, that the poor might have hope; He came in sufferings, that breaking hearts might be consoled; He shared the wretchedness of the poor, that they might share the riches of His glory. He partook of their sorrows with the children of sorrow, that they might participate in His joy. "Come to me," He cries, "all you who labor and are heavy laden"; heavy laden with sin or sorrow; "come to me, and I will refresh you"; "Nay, even blessed are the sorrowful. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance. He would have mercy and not sacrifice. He courted the society of sinners, and dispensed His graces amongst them. He loved to be with the sorrowful, that He might dispel their sorrow,—as He wept with sympathy for the sisters of Lazarus, He no doubt smiled with them in their joy on the resurrection of their brother. Who restored the widow's son to life? Was it not Jesus? Who forgave the Magdalen? Was it not Jesus? Who was the father of the prodigal child? Who cleansed the leper? Who restored sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf? Who fed the hungry on the mountain? Who was the good shepherd that left the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, and sought the one that went astray? Was it not Jesus? Here are the grounds of our hope. Are you satisfied with them? But they are still stronger. Did He not die upon a cross, and shed even the last drop of His blood for our sakes, that we might have hope in His merits? And even during the death agony which transfixed His soul on that occasion, was not mercy the last act of His life, the last thought of His mind, the last utterance of His lips? "This day," said He to the penitent thief, "thou shalt be with me in Paradise"; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," said He in extenuation of the wickedness of His executioners; that is, not only of those who physically caused His death-pangs, but of us who by our sins crucify Him again every day of our lives.

Even after His death and resurrection, and ascension into heaven, He is still the foundation of our hope. "He is at the right hand of God," as St. Paul says, "making intercession for us." Oh! my brethren, truly our hopes are well grounded, for they are grounded on the mercy, on the truth of God—on infinite mercy, and infallible truth—they are grounded on the superabundant merits of Christ, the beloved Son of His Eternal Father, in whom He is well pleased.

But lastly, we must inquire what should be the character of our hope—how should we hope? I answer, that our hope, like our faith, must not lie dormant; it must be active; it must fructify in good works—"By our fruits we shall be known." He who hopes that, as God is infinitely merciful, he has nothing to fear, does not hope, but he presumes on the mercy of God; he offends God, because God is merciful—that is to say, he makes God's attributes ancillary to his guilt. Let such a man beware of that hardness of heart which is the worst punishment God inflicts on man in this life—the desert to which the soul is relegated, beyond the reach of grace, or pardon: let him remember that the Son of Man will come at the hour He is not looked for, and when a life of presumption may terminate in a death-bed of despair. Nor let your hope be like the hope of worldlings, a weak, flickering flame, quickened into a spasmodic life by the occasional breathings of a disturbed conscience, but lapsing into darkness before every new glare of the world's pleasure-scenes. The child of pleasure, when pleasure wearies, lifts his eyes to heaven, and sighs for the peace which is there: he would fly up with wings of hope, but his wings are clogged with the mire of worldliness, and he falls to earth again. A gleam of heaven's delight is enkindled in his soul for a moment, and he hopes to gain it; but then he thinks how hard is the task, and the light is quenched as soon as it is enkindled. An eternity of happiness sacrificed for the fleeting pleasures of an hour! Hope is not a mere feeling of the mind; not a mere confidence in the mercy of God; it is not that state of the soul indicated by some people when they say, after falling into sin, "Oh! God is good, and He will pardon me." No: hope is a well-founded expectation of being saved, after we have done all in our power toward our salvation: it is that desire of the soul, by which she sighs for God above all things, by which she eagerly longs to be with Him, and to enjoy Him—by which she would willingly endure any loss, even that of life itself, before she would be content to lose her God. It is that disposition of the soul, by which she has no confidence in the aid of man, but places all her reliance in God; that feeling that animated the breast of David, when he said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with sword, and shield, and spear, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." "Blessed is he," says the Psalmist, "whose hope is in the name of the Lord." Such should be our hope, strong, but not presumptuous; resting on the infinite mercy, and the unerring promises of God. I have said that the merits of Christ are superabundant; that is to say, as by the least suffering He could have amply atoned, so by His multiplied sufferings He has atoned beyond measure. From this infinite atonement, some heretics argue that man is saved by faith alone—that he cannot merit anything by good works, as Christ's merits are more than sufficient for man's salvation. This is not the place to show the falsity of that doctrine: for me, it is sufficient to tell you, that the teaching of the Catholic Church is different—it assures us that, in order that we should be saved, those merits of Christ must be applied to our souls; that He will have suffered in vain for us, unless we have that application of His merits made to us by good works, and by the reception of the Sacraments. Hence, we are not saved by a torpid faith, by an inactive hope, but by those virtues animated by charity, by the love of God, by a patient endurance of troubles and afflictions for God's sake, and by a worthy reception of the Sacraments—these channels through which the merits of Christ are applied to our souls; through which His graces flow to us, and replenishing us with love, enliven our faith, and reanimate our hope, making both effective to our resurrection on the last day, with an undying life in the enjoyment of eternal glory. Sinners, therefore, and sorrowers, here is your consolation, the sweet consolation of Christian hope, the well-grounded assurance that your sins will be forgiven, and that your sorrows will be turned into joy. Were your sins as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow. Were your sorrows as great as ever tested human endurance, they would not be proportioned to the measure of glory that shall hereafter be revealed in you.

Live then forever in hope. Say, with the Psalmist, "Thou, O Lord, art my protector, and my refuge, my God, and I will trust in Thee." He who has no hope is like a shipwrecked mariner at night, when the clouds have obscured the stars; while the Christian, animated by this Divine virtue, sails safely abroad over the tranquil deep, in the purest sunlight of heaven. Hope is a bright angel that loves to hang in the wake of those whose souls are clouded with sin, and whose hearts are burdened with sorrow. Where poverty and affliction take up their abodes, there the bright spirit comes to shed a cheering ray. In the prison cell she whispers to the captive that the day of freedom is coming fast and the gloom of his dungeon is brightened for a moment. In the dreary, desolate chamber, where some lone sufferer pines beneath the withering shadows of hunger, and disease, and neglect, she comes and tells that this cannot last—that some human consoler is at hand; or should humanity still prove forgetful, that God, the infinitely loving, and merciful, and bounteous, will soon replenish that hungry soul with the plenty of His house; that the parching tongue will soon be satiated with the waters that flow by His eternal throne; that the gaunt shadow of disease shall be dispelled by the brightness of eternal life, and joy become the inheritance forever of the solitary sorrower. Hope loves to visit the death-bed of the Christian, and never quits it until the soul is fled, and her duty is done. When the heart is almost pulseless, and the limbs stark and stiff, and growing cold, and the tide of life is ebbing, hope directs the flickering glance of the gradually darkening eye to that vista of heavenly glories through which the soul is soon to pass, and beyond which she shall repose forever. The last throb of the heart is a throb of hope—the last sparkle of the eye is enkindled by hope. Hope accompanies the disembodied spirit to the very gate of Paradise, and with a smile of triumph hands her over forever to joy.

May such be our end! When life's last hour is come, and the shadows of the past are fleeting!—when nought remains to us but the memories of sin, and the fears of judgment, may hope stand by our bedside, to chase those memories, and to dispel those fears. May she cheer us on in that trying hour, and make its sorrows light, and its bitterness not so bitter. May our hearts be enabled to feel, though our lips may not be able to utter, the sentiment of the Psalmist, "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped: I shall not be confounded forever." Then may we pass forever into that happy land, where the sorrowful cease to mourn, and where the weary are at rest; thus experiencing for eternity the truth of the Divine promise, that mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord. Amen.

SERMON ON ALL SOULS' DAY.

"It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."—2 MACH. xii. 46.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—The annual return of All Souls' Day, which has just gone by, reminds us of one of our most serious religious obligations, namely, the obligation of praying that such of our brethren who have died in the faith of the Lord may be rescued by Him from the temporary punishment which they endure for their sins, and that they may be restored to the heaven which awaits them as an eternal reward for the virtues they practiced during their mortal career upon this earth; for, that there is in the next life a place or state of punishment where such souls suffer, no Christian is permitted to doubt. Indeed amongst all the dogmas of our holy faith there is not one more clearly proved nor more consoling than this. Supposing that no such place existed, what could be more painful for us than to feel that we should never again cast a thought upon those whom we so tenderly loved during life; to think that at the moment of their death all connection between them and us is severed forever; that, considering their mortal frailty and the circumstances of their death, they perhaps suffer eternal torments for their sins; or that, should they be so happy as to have passed without delay into the kingdom of God's glory, they sing His eternal praises, indifferent to us, and to our prayers, notwithstanding the tenderness and love they manifested to us while dwelling here below! And yet such is the faith of those who differ from us in religion. The moment their friend, father, mother, brother, or sister dies, they know not whither the soul of the lost one is gone. Knowing the weakness of that soul during life, remembering the many sins it had committed, considering that death came suddenly without warning, that the hour came when it was least expected, and when the suffering, perhaps unconscious patient had no thought of either time or eternity, the serious must ever doubt whether that soul is reigning with God, or suffering the eternal torments of hell. And even though they had a confidence that their deceased friend was happy with God forever, yet, their religion teaches them that they need never address to them a single prayer, a solitary aspiration; for in the intercession of the Saints with God, they have no faith: and thus, no matter how dear that friend may have been, though it might have been the darling child of its mother, who a thousand times had clasped the lost one to her bosom in transports of love, yet, once the hour of death is past, the strings of that love are forever snapped asunder—child and mother part; between them no community of thought or of interest ever again shall pass; they shall perhaps never meet even beyond the grave. Oh! gloomy thought; rank as the heresy that gave it birth.

But, for us who have the happiness to enjoy the true faith, how sweet, how consoling, is the doctrine professed by our Church in this subject. Considering the infinite mercy of God, we have a strong confidence that all our fellow-creatures who die in the faith of the Lord, fortified with the Sacraments of the Church, received either in fact or in desire, if they do not pass at once to the happiness of heaven, yet escaping the eternal torments of hell, suffer for some time in Purgatory, where they may be consoled and relieved, and whence they be at length delivered by our prayers. Though they be dead, they still live to us; we are interested in them as much as if they still moved amongst us; and when they are permitted by God to pass into the kingdom of His glory, they pray for us to Him without ceasing, that He may give us the grace to live so that we may meet them and be happy with them through all the ages of eternity. Oh! consoling thought, which takes from the grave the victory and from death the sting! Oh! blessed communion of Saints—by which all the children of God are united in spirit, whether militant on earth, suffering in Purgatory, or triumphant in heaven. Oh! happy invention of the Divine goodness, by which we escape eternal torments, and become purified from the dross of earth; and made fit to shine like the stars in the firmament of heaven.

My brethren, although your faith in the doctrine of Purgatory is strong and unshaken, yet, as it behooves all Christians to give an account of the faith that is in them, I will briefly explain to you the grounds on which this belief is based, and why it has ever been the clear and explicit teaching of the Holy Catholic Church.

We read in the Book of Machabees, that Judas Machabeus sent 12,000 drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and rejoicing at the resurrection; for if he had not hoped that they who were dead should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead; and because he had considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them, "it is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." Nothing could be more explicit than this. Purgatory is, according to the Fathers of the Church, that place of exile and suffering, that prison, whence no man shall be released until he pay the "last farthing." Hell is a prison, but the debt of guilt there can never be paid; and therefore another place of punishment must exist, where the last farthing of the debt of sin must and will be exacted. Again, St. Paul says, that in the next life "Every man's work shall be manifest, for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's word abide, which he had built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). In these words Purgatory is most clearly, and most unmistakably described. We are assured by the Sacred Scriptures that nothing defiled shall enter into the holy city of the heavenly Jerusalem—"nothing defiled." Hence, if there is no place of purgation, it follows that the just man, who has lived all his life in grace, and dies after committing one venial sin, is lost forever, since venial sin being a defilement he cannot enter into heaven. Monstrous thought! unworthy of the goodness, mercy, and love of the Almighty. If there be no Purgatory, it follows that nearly every one is damned, for every one dies with some defilement of the soul, except children, after baptism; martyrs, who are purified in their own blood, or penitents, who, by years of mortification and self-punishment, have blotted out the last vestige of guilt from their souls. But the good and loving God has willed that, in the next life, such of us as shall quit this world still stained with guilt, or not having fully atoned for our sins, shall suffer, and be purified from the last blemish that defiles the soul, until we become worthy to reign forever with the bright spirits that surround His celestial throne! Again, "Whosoever," says He, "shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven to him; but whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven to him, either in this world or the next." Now, in the next life no sin can be forgiven in heaven, because no sin exists there; nor in hell, for out of hell there is no redemption; therefore, it follows, that some third place exists, where sin may be forgiven: that place, doubtless, is Purgatory.

I have thought it right, my brethren, to lay down this much of the grounds on which the Church has built her faith in the existence of Purgatory, in order that you may more firmly believe in this great truth; that your hope of eternal life may be strengthened by knowing that such a place exists, where you may make sufficient atonement to God for the sins you may not cancel in this life; and that your charity may be so inflamed that you may relieve, by your prayers, alms, and good works, these poor souls that there suffer for their sins, and wait patiently for your prayers, which may release them from their sufferings, and restore them to the eternal enjoyment of their God.

My brethren, in order that you may understand the nature of your obligation toward the suffering souls in Purgatory, I will show you that it is one of the most serious obligations imposed on us by the virtue of charity, whether we regard that virtue as the love of God, of ourselves, or of our neighbors. By praying for the dead, we further the interests of God, because the dearest interest of God is to receive glory from His creatures; and by our prayers for the dead we do all in our power to add new members to the celestial choirs, who chant His praises in heaven. That souls created to His likeness, and so tenderly loved by Him, should suffer such dreadful pangs, must, as it were, do violence to the heart of God. For what does God see in Purgatory? He sees souls which He loves, with all the tenderness of His Divine love, and yet whose torments His justice forbids Him to alleviate. Souls filled with merits, adorned with grace, replete with virtues, whom He cannot yet reward—the souls of His elect, espoused by His Divine Son, which He is bound by His justice to strike with the scourge of His wrath. What violence must this conflict between justice and love cause in the bosom of the merciful Father of the Faithful! By praying for the dead we, as it were, release God from this difficulty. We pray, and His mercy is moved to forgiveness. We entreat Him for the poor suffering souls of our deceased brethren, and His Divine heart is moved to compassion. He looks benignly on the victims of sin, expiating their guilt in those fiery flames: and yielding to the violence of our prayers, He takes them by the hand, and leads them into the eternal mansions of the blessed. In the next life God's justice alone prevails; in this His mercy abounds. His justice forbids Him to give the least comfort to the suffering souls of the faithful; but His mercy permits us to do so. We console them by our prayers—by our alms—by our fasting. We thus give glory to God, by affording to His creatures those consolations which He is Himself forbidden by His justice to impart. Thus, by praying for the dead, we further the dearest interests of God. We also further our own interests, for every soul that we release by our prayers, from the flames of Purgatory, will, in a spirit of gratitude, do violence to the throne of heaven in our behalf.

But, my brethren, the strongest motive that should induce us to pray for the dead is a sense of compassion for the fearful sufferings they endure before they are permitted to behold the face of God. Of the nature of these sufferings we have no conception. Could we form some notion of the enormity of sin, we might be able to conceive the punishment which it deserves; but we commit it so often, we have become so familiarized with the monster, that for us it has horrors no longer, and we know not how hideous it is in the sight of God, or how fearfully it awakes His vengeance and His wrath. We are assured by the Fathers of the Church, and it is in the Church a constant tradition, that Purgatory is a place of fire, and that the flames are the same as those in which the damned suffer in hell. Indeed, the sufferings of the just in Purgatory and the damned in hell are exactly alike in all respects but one, and that is the extent of their duration. The flames of Purgatory cease, but those of hell, enkindled by the wrath of God, shall burn as long as He shall reign in heaven. Excruciating, however, as those torments are, they are as nothing in comparison to what is called the loss of light, which, of all other sufferings, is the most agonizing to the departed soul. Cut off for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years from God, whom it has at length learned to know and to love, denied His company, His consolation, His vision, dwelling in the land of darkness and solitude and pain, the soul in Purgatory suffers the most unspeakable woe. Let me ask you, for a moment, to strive to realize this agonizing sense of loss. Imagine yourself in this life banished for a great period of your lives, say twenty years, to a foreign land, a land where you should toil without a shade or canopy beneath the burning rays of a torrid sun. During that long and melancholy period of your lives, you are not permitted to open your lips, to exchange one word with a fellow-creature, but, cowering beneath the lash of a taskmaster, you toil and sweat monotonously on from day to day. The labor and the heat, and the cruel sufferings are more bitter even than death itself; but worse, far worse, are the solitary thoughts that haunt your soul in that far distant land; you think of the tender mother, of the afflicted father, of the beloved brother, sister, children, from whom you have been so rudely dragged away. From day to day, from year to year, you sigh and think of those dear distant friends. You never hear of them during your long pilgrimage; you know not whether they are dead or living, whether you shall ever more see one of them again; and even should you see them in the end, how changed will they be! Alas! no longer the same, but care-worn, old, and heedless of all the joys that this world can give! What tongue can paint the agonies of those twenty long, dreary years, the bitterest ingredient in which is the same sad, ever-haunting lonely thought that you have no one to love, that those whom you do love are so far away, and that the chances are that on earth you shall never again behold them! If such be the pain of loss on earth, what must it be to the suffering soul in Purgatory? Banished, exiled for a hundred, perhaps a thousand years, nay, perhaps until the great judgment day, from all communion either with God or man; with no one to cheer, no one to console her, apparently forgotten and cast aside, recognizing God as the only source of happiness; seeing now in all the light of the other life His infinite sweetness, goodness, love, borne on toward Him, as the torrent is borne on irresistibly to the ocean, and yet unable to attain her goal, the poor soul endures bitterness and torture of which the saddest tears ever shed by mortal in this life have been but a mockery of interpretation. And who are they, my brethren, that endure those bitter woes? They are, many of them, your own nearest and once dearest friends. Parents, they are the children whom God has lately taken from your festive tables and your pleasant firesides; the children whom you cherished as your own lives, for whose cut fingers you would have bartered your own right hand; whose slightest trouble shed a shadow and gloom over your minds; for whom you would have freely sacrificed your very lives. Children, they are your parents, the parents who brought you up in tenderness and love, and whom you loved with all the yearning affection of your young hearts. Aye, and what perhaps is more pitiful still, there are many poor souls enduring those frightful tortures, both of pain and loss, who never knew, even on earth, the charms of friendship or congenial love, whose sadness and affliction, while they lived, seemed to point them out as special marks for the wrath of God, and who now must languish in their dark prison for centuries before one ray of consolation shall beam upon their chastened souls. There are those who died when all who knew them had passed away, and who, dying, did not leave one behind to say, "The Lord have mercy on their souls." There are those who went down into the deep sea in the dead of night, unknown or forgotten, for whose eternal rest no prayer of a friend shall ever ascend before the throne of God; there are the soldiers who died in battle in foreign lands, of whose death no one knows, or cares to know, and for whom no requiem shall ever be sung, for whom no Pater Noster or Ave Maria shall ever appeal to heaven. Oh! my brethren, how well may we suppose these poor souls to cry out in the words of the Prophet Jeremias, "All ye who pass by the way, attend and see is there any sorrow like unto our sorrow." They cry out to us to ease their sorrows, to alleviate their woes, to shorten their imprisonment by our prayers to God; but they cry in vain, we heed them not. In the words of Job, each one of them cries out to us, "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me." Parents, have you no compassion for your suffering children, whose slightest pang you were fain to soothe while they dwelt amongst you? Children, is your love for your parents to terminate just at the moment that their real sufferings commence? When they were dying you propped their pillows, and poured the balm of consolation into their breaking hearts. Is your solicitude to cease when they really want your assistance? Death is but a painted affliction in comparison to what they suffer now. What says

St. Cyril on this subject? "If all the woes, and torments, and afflictions that could be conceived in this world were united together, in comparison to the pains of Purgatory they would be even a sweet consolation." And those are the sufferings your nearest and dearest friends endure. "Have pity on me," they exclaim, "have pity on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

And what of those who have no friends? Will you pay no heed to their entreaties? You would throw a penny to a beggar in the street to alleviate a mere passing trouble, to supply a trifling want; will you be deaf to the voice of those sufferings which in one moment exceed all the agonies of a lifetime here? Oh! my brethren, our indifference to the dead is cruel in the extreme! Their case will probably be ours, and that very, very soon. What will be our agony, then, if we find that of all those who knew us on earth, not one ever cares to remember us in that land of woe; that no one is found to utter a "Lord, have mercy on our souls!" What would you think of a man who, passing by the bank of a river and seeing a fellow-creature drowning, would not stretch out a hand to save him, when only a hand would do it? Would you not denounce him as more than a barbarian? And what will you think of yourselves, when you pass by the way, when you see your fellow-creatures bathed in an ocean of fire, and never utter one "Our Father" for their souls, when that one prayer might snatch them from the abyss, and restore them to the eternal joys of heaven? It is, perhaps, not so much through cruelty as want of thought. Henceforward, then, my brethren, resolve never to forget this great duty of charity to your afflicted brethren in Purgatory. Whenever you pray, strive to remember them, at morning and at night, in all your prayers and aspirations to God. Imitate the Church in her solicitude for the dead. To almost all the prayers in her Liturgy is appended some short appeal for those who died in the Lord, that they may be loosed from their sins; and on one day in each year, throughout the whole world, she stretches forth the hands of her children in entreaty to the Lord. From every altar of her churches ascends a heartfelt prayer that mercy may be extended to the dead. Joining with her, let us beg of God that He may grant them eternal rest in the bosom of His glory; that in His infinite mercy He may restore them to that land where weeping and sorrow shall be no more, and where they may intercede in turn for us, that quitting this valley of tears we may taste the eternal sweetness of God in the kingdom of His glory.

SERMON ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

> "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because He hath regard to the humility of His handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed: because He that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is His name."—LUKE i. 46–49.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—The end of all religion is to give glory to God; for this, in every age, temples have been erected; for this Bishops and Priests have been consecrated to the Divine service; for this Hermits and Anchorites have made the caves of the desert resound with sighs of repentance and hymns of praise; for this the pious children of the universal Church never cease to work and pray. It is to proclaim the glory of the Lord that we are assembled here to-night—to announce the wonders of His mercy and His love. We join with the whole Church, during these eight days, in celebrating one of the greatest events in which God's glory has ever been shown forth—the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the commemoration of this event we honor her whom God has so signally distinguished above all the children of the human race; but to Him is all the glory and all the praise, "To the King of ages immortal and invisible—to God alone be honor and glory forever!"—(Ep. Tim.) While we honor the Saints we honor God, because in their heroic deeds the marvels of His grace shine forth. "God," says the Psalmist, "is wonderful in His saints," and the greater their works the more superhuman their strength, the purer their lives, the more magnificently are displayed the power and glory of Him by whose grace they attained so exalted a degree of perfection. Of all the Saints of God, Mary, His mother, was the greatest; she was not only spotless in her very Conception—not only sinless in her whole life, but every grace and spiritual privilege that was ever possessed by any Saint she enjoyed in a supereminent degree: and yet, not to her is the glory of this sanctity, but to God. "My soul," she cries, "doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed; because He that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is His name." In celebrating, therefore, her Immaculate Conception, we join with her in giving praise to Him who conferred on her that stupendous honor; from whose hands she issued, without any merit of her own, as the ray issues from the sun, bright, pure, and perfect.

As the myriad spectators who pass by the way behold some world's wonder of architectural beauty and magnificence, and exclaim in amazement, how great was the genius of him who designed it! so does all humanity gaze with astonishment at the immaculate temple of the Holy Ghost, this Virgin, pure even in her Conception, in whose soul every grace shines forth with lustre truly heavenly, and glorifies the Creator, who fashioned a being of perfection so marvellous, so unrivalled. For however Mary may have merited grace and glory, like the other Saints, from the first dawn of her reason her Immaculate Conception was a purely gratuitous gift of God, irrespective of all her future merits. But for God Mary would have been like any of ourselves, weak and sinful; and, in point of fact, she was sentenced, as we were, to the guilt and penalties of original sin, and was rescued from them only by the very same means that we were—namely, the merits of a suffering God. We were saved from sin after falling into it; Mary was so saved that she never fell into it, even in her Conception being spotless. Therefore does she say, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my *Saviour*, because He that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is His name." Yes, great things indeed hath He done for her; He saved her from the slough of sin, into which all mankind were cast; He beautified and adorned her, and made her all fair; to be His own mother; to be the second Eve; the reparatrix of man's lost happiness; the casket into which all the jewels of His grace were to repose; the star of the sea, which was to reflect on men all the beauty and glory of the Sun of Justice; the model on which the whole human race might fashion their souls for future glory: in a word, the soul in which God's Holy Spirit found its most gorgeous, its best beloved sanctuary, as the Son of God found her chaste womb the choicest resting-place for His Divinity.

My brethren, it has ever been the belief of the Catholic Church, and is now an article of our holy faith, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in her mother's womb without the slightest stain of sin. This was the first step taken by God in the work of our Redemption, the preparation of a pure being, who would be worthy to bring His Divine Son into the world that He might shed His blood for man's salvation. We, therefore, share with her the honor we give to God, in recognition of the great blessing of our deliverance from sin and hell.

As she was to bring forth Him who was purity itself, it was only in accordance with His honor that she should be the purest of all beings, that she should be free from all taint of sin, which He came to destroy. When God directed in the old law that a temple should be raised in His honor, where He was to reside, not in substance, but only in figure, what splendor, what magnificence did He exact in its construction, and in its preparation for His service! David was a great saint, one of God's most chosen servants, a man whom He signalized most magnificently by the choicest favors of His mercy and His love; and yet, because David's hands were imbrued with the blood of battles, however justly fought, God did not permit him to erect a temple to His honor; that exalted privilege was reserved for Solomon, the wisest of men, and the richest of monarchs. And when the temple was finished, what purifications, what consecrations, what rites and ceremonies were deemed necessary for that edifice, where only sacrifices were to be offered to the Most High! But Mary was a creature fashioned by the Divine Artificer Himself, in whose body His Divine Son was to receive His conception; in which He was not figuratively, but substantially, to reside, which was the flesh and blood of which His were to be formed. Oh! what tongue can tell, what mind can conceive her purity, her holiness? what language can exaggerate it, what homage can venerate it sufficiently?

We, in our weakness of intellect here below, can scarcely imagine the wonder of Divine grace by which God exempted Mary from the stain of original sin; but we may form some notion of it from considering the evils wrought by sin in the world, from which she was rescued by His grace. The holiest men that ever lived, His most cherished and beloved servants, were all conceived in sin; the great Abraham, the father of God's chosen people; Moses, with whom the Lord spoke on Mount Sinai as a man is wont to speak with his friend; the patient Job; the holy David, who exclaimed, "Behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me." St. John the Baptist, who was sent as an angel before the face of the Redeemer, to prepare the way for Him, was conceived in sin; so was the beloved disciple of Jesus; so were Peter and Paul, His two chief apostles; so, in a word, were all the children of men born children of wrath. Sin was a universal plague, spreading contagion all around—a disease congenital to our souls from the earliest dawn of our existence; a sea in which all were alike immersed; a prison in which all were confined; a cloud enveloping in impenetrable darkness the souls of all the children of Adam! Mary alone was saved from the general malady. "Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is no stain in thee." She alone arose triumphant over sin's destructive sea; like the ark of Noah, to which she has been justly compared, the only thing of earth that escaped the universal deluge; she alone was not imprisoned within the walls of guilt; for, in the words of the Psalmist she could say to the Almighty, "But this I know, that thou hast a good will for me, because my enemy shall not rejoice over me." She alone was not obscured in the all-embracing cloud, or, rather, she alone burst from above it on the world, bright and spotless, the herald of the Sun of Justice; the precursor of infinite purity; the harbinger of eternal light and life! "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning, rising fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?" Such may we suppose to have been the ecstatic language of the angels, when, after the long night of sin, clouds and spiritual darkness, they beheld Mary, the mother of the coming Redeemer, bursting into light, fair as the moon in the purity of her innocence, bright as the sun in the ardor of her love, terrible as an army with serried ranks, with burnished helmets, and glistening lances, coming forward to do battle with the hereditary foes of mankind, the powers of hell, and the tyranny of sin, ushering in the Saviour, the God of hosts, who would scatter the legions of Lucifer; the Prince of Peace, who would blot out the handwriting of sin, and open to lost man the gates of heaven, so long closed; the God of love, who would cast upon the earth the fire of His charity which should never be extinguished. It is by considering Mary thus, that we form some idea of her rare prerogatives and her exalted dignity; by viewing her as the parent to us of all those graces and blessings without which we should inevitably be lost forever, and by the aid of which we may attain immortal glory and happiness with our God.

If we did not know for certain, by the constant and universal teaching of God's Church, that the Blessed Virgin was conceived immaculate, we should satisfy ourselves that it was true, by barely considering that nothing was more natural and necessary for God's honor than that she should be so conceived; for, could anything be more abhorrent to our feelings than to suppose that the Son of God was born of a sinful woman, of a woman that ever knew guilt against Him? Would it not be a reproach to Him that His flesh was the flesh of one tainted with iniquity? The God of infinite purity could not, consistently with His honor and dignity, be born of a woman unless she was the purest and most spotless being that ever issued from His hands; for, increate wisdom could not reside in a tainted abode. Of this we are assured by the wise man, who says, "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins" (Wisd. i. 4). Mary, therefore, who was destined from all eternity to be the Mother of God, was fitted by Him with every possible grace; was fashioned by Him the purest of creatures, that she might be worthy of so exalted, so unparalleled a dignity. "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit." How could a mother bring forth infinite purity unless she was herself at all times pure? And who will say that God could not save her from the malediction pronounced by Him on the whole human race. Who will say that He could not, consistently with His truth, make her an exception? Who will say that a pure scion could not, by a special privilege, branch off from an impure stock? *Thou,* inspired Job, canst answer the question. "Who can make him clean, that is conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou who only art?" Yes, God made Mary an exception to the whole human race, that she might be a worthy mother to His only Son. Alas! for the faith of those who will allow Mary no grace, no degree of purity above the other daughters of Adam. Is it possible that the Mother of the Great God should be only like the rest of women, infirm of nature, and prone to sin? On the contrary, as she was the only being selected from the myriads to be His mother, is it not reasonable that she should be distinguished from all the children of men by some characteristic of peculiar greatness? Now, it is only by grace we are great in the sight of God; and the Immaculate Conception was the only grace by which the Blessed Virgin could be possibly distinguished from the rest of the human race; for, if she were born in sin, or conceived in it, she would differ from no human being; if she led a life of great sanctity, she could be only called the greatest of the Saints, but would be like to them, a creature working, praying, and meriting before God. But by her being conceived without sin, God marked her out by a most striking, unmistakable peculiarity, by a most splendid dignity, not vouchsafed even to the dearest souls He ever created—a dignity which brings her nearest to Himself, and farthest from Humanity, like some brilliant star in the midst of the firmament at the footstool of the Almighty, attracting the gaze, and winning the admiration of all the world's wayfarers.

These sentiments in relation to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary have prevailed in the Church from its earliest foundation, and have never received any serious contradiction. For that reason the Church did not think proper to define it as an article of faith, because the Church, for the most part, never proceeds to defining Dogmas unless when the truth of her universal teaching is impugned by contumacious heretics; but in these latter years the devotion of the Blessed Virgin became so intense in the Church that there sprang up a general desire that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception should be settled on a fixed, indisputable, and everlasting basis of belief; and, therefore, the illustrious Pontiff who now guides, under God, the destinies of the Church, deemed it fit to conform to the prevailing wish of all his spiritual children. He accordingly pronounced with infallible voice, and with the enthusiastic approbation of the universal Church in every region of the earth, that, "It is revealed by God, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was in the first moment of her conception, by a singular privilege from God, free from all stain of sin, and that this doctrine must, therefore, be firmly and forever believed by the faithful." And if only in consideration of this tribute on the part of the great Pontiff to the Holy Mother of God, setting aside his numerous other claims to our love and veneration, may we not this night justly express a hope, and pour forth a prayer, that she whom he has so much honored, and whose Divine Son he has so gloriously represented through troubles and afflictions seldom paralleled in the history of the Church, may protect him from the enemies that beset his throne, his honor, and his life? that she may not suffer the gray hairs of the Great Old Man to descend in sorrow to the grave, but by her powerful intercession may she deliver him from the dangers that encompass him, and steer him safely over the sea of which she is the guiding star? that he may present to mankind an instance of patience, meekness, and resignation, triumphant, even on the verge of the grave, over all the fiery darts of the wicked one, over all the combined powers of earth and hell?

Now, my brethren, for all the graces and blessings God has bestowed on the Blessed Virgin Mary, and particularly for the grace of her Immaculate Conception, to Him be all honor and glory. Although, however, God be thus supremely and strictly speaking alone worthy of honor, He yet permits us to pay some honor to certain of His creatures, and to all according to their dignity and merit. Thus, we are commanded by Him to "honor our father and mother." True, finally all honor redounds to God, because without His grace the greatest saint that ever lived might have been the greatest sinner. "There is no crime," says St. Augustine, "that any one ever committed, which any other man may not commit, unless prevented by the grace of God." We honor the saints, because by complying with His graces they proved themselves faithful servants to Him; they merited God's approval; they merited the enjoyment of His rewards; why should they not merit our honor, our esteem, our praise? But we honor the Blessed Virgin, not so much because by complying with God's grace during her life she merited His love, and in so far was on a par with the other saints; no, but we honor her specially because she was the Mother of God, and by this dignity stood above all the other saints by an inconceivable height of grandeur. We never speak of her as Saint Mary—we say Mary, the Mother of God. The graces which she received from God to qualify her for this dignity were purely His gifts, and had no reference to her merits, because she could not merit until she existed. He selected her from the whole human race to be the mother of His Divine Son, and enriched her, even to overflowing, with His choicest gifts and graces, that she might be adapted for the sustainment of that transcendent dignity. "Hail," said the angel to her, "hail, Mary, full of grace." She would not be full of grace if any grace was wanting to her; and that is another reason for confessing that she did not want the grace of Immaculate Conception. Even in a worldly sense, there was no honor of which she was not worthy, for she was the lineal descendant of the oldest and most glorious monarchical line in the world.

If God Himself, therefore, so much honored her, what ought to be the expression of our honor? Will we honor the representatives of wealth, of the wretched dross of this world's pelf, and refuse to honor her who was the mother of infinite riches, and is the possessor of all the wealth of heaven? Will men bow down before beauty, and sacrifice their very souls upon its unhallowed altar, and fail to do homage to her who is all fair, and in whom there was no stain—the lily of womanhood amongst the thorns of humanity? Will we pay reverence to the learned and the wise, and deny it to her who was the Mother of Wisdom? Will all the world go out in its holiday dress to behold the spectacle of an earthly queen—will the cannons roar, and the joybells ring when she comes, and will the air be filled with shouts of jubilee when her diadem glitters in the sunshine, and yet so few come out to meet the Queen of Heaven, so few be found to sound her praises, or swell the canticle of rejoicing for her glories? Nay, will we bend with devotion over the tomb of buried majesty and queenly splendor, though the form beneath has crumbled into dust, and no tongue can tell where the spirit dwells? And shall we not approach with feelings of veneration the shrine of her whose body was that from which the body of Jesus was formed—the flesh which the Word of God assumed, and which, in a state of incorruption, was taken up into His kingdom, and whose spirit dwells in those regions of bliss, where she is the Queen of Angels and of Saints—nay, of heaven itself? Oh! strange perversion of reason—strange fatuity of irreligion that cries, "Honor to whom honor is due," and will refuse it to the fairest, purest, queenliest being that ever issued from the hand of God—to God's own Mother—to her who, despite her humility, was forced by the irresistible influence of inspiration to proclaim her own exalted privilege of being venerated by the world. "Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, therefore shall all generations call me blessed." The very hatred and contempt which she receives at the hands of those who despise our holy religion, and all that belongs to it, should stimulate us to intensify our feelings of love and veneration toward her, that we may, if possible, supply by the excess of our devotion for the defective homage of our fellow-men, if only that, by the ardor of our attachment, we may induce her to intercede more earnestly for them to God, that they may be converted from a course so disrespectful to her, so hateful to God, and so injurious to the interests of their own immortal souls. For, alas! they shall pass away, and find, too late, the error of their thoughts, and the evil of their deeds; but Mary will still be Queen of Heaven, and verify her own prediction, that "all generations shall call me blessed."

With death man's power and greatness become extinct, the power and greatness before which the world bows down in most respectful homage; but the glory of the saints, and above all, the glory of her who was "full of grace," shall never come to an end; shall never be diminished by a single ray of its effulgence. She shall reign the Queen of Heaven for all eternity, and the purest and holiest of the saints. They who fasted, and watched, and wept in caves and deserts; they who lived and died for God alone—nay, they who never stained the white robe of baptismal purity shall gaze forever with love and veneration on her who was Immaculate from the very dawn of her Conception, and whose soul, from that instant until her departure from this world, was like a placid lake receiving into its bosom from all sides the rivers and the streamlets flowing from the ocean of God's grace, until at the close of her life it ebbed back with all its sparkling tributaries into the boundless depths from which those tributaries were derived. All honor, then, after God, to God's holy Mother, to the Immaculate Virgin Mary—to her whom all generations shall call blessed, blessed amongst women, blessed before she was born, blessed after her assumption into heaven beyond all the saints of God, beyond all the angels that worship before the Eternal Throne, beside which she reigns and shines radiant with everlasting beauty.

But, my brethren, the most pleasing thought for us to-night is, that it is in our power to procure in our behalf the intercession of that glorious Virgin before the Throne of God. And we are surely justified in believing that He will never refuse her prayer, whatever it may be; for, how could God be deaf to the entreaties of her who gave Him more glory than all the children of men; in contemplating whom He took an infinite delight? When God created the world, we are told that He saw it was good: what must have been His complacency in beholding her, who was so faithful to the graces of His Holy Spirit—who, in her relation to His Divine Son, from the manger to the cross, followed and watched, suffered and wept with Him, the Man of Sorrows, as she was Sorrow's Queen, who was in body and soul the most beauteous being that ever came from His creative hand; a being so pure that were it possible for men to atone, she alone would have atoned to Him for the inexpiable crime of Eve? Would that we were Immaculate as she was: but, alas! that is past, we can only emulate her fidelity to grace, as it is impossible to aim at the purity of her soul. Oh! if we would obtain her intercession, if we would have her plead for us with her whole heart to God, let us beg of her on this night, when earth and heaven triumph in the celebration of her Immaculate Conception, to pray to God for us that we may study and work for a purity of heart which may make each one of us worthy hereafter to cry out with her—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because He that is mighty hath done great things for me, and holy is His name."

SERMON ON THE VALUE OF TIME.

"A little while, and you will not see me."—John xvi. 16, etc.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—The words read in the Gospel of this day form part of a discourse delivered by Our Blessed Saviour to His apostles immediately after the Last Supper, and intended by Him to prepare them for the difficulties they were to encounter in establishing His Church upon earth. Many portions of that discourse apply to the Apostles alone, spoken for their guidance only; this, with many other parts, is pointed for our instruction as well as theirs. For that reason it is proposed on this day for the consideration of the faithful, and is suggested for the exposition of the preachers. The Saviour has forewarned His apostles of the great labors they should undertake, and the great sufferings they should endure in the fulfilment of the task set before them. It was only meet that He should hold forth to them the prospect of repose after their toils, and of joy after their sorrows. While He was with them, weak as they were in faith, and dull to the influence of grace, they were sustained and gladdened by Him—sustained by the invigorating power of His words; gladdened by the ineffable charms of His converse. Thus on one occasion when, startled by the simple force with which He foretold the doctrine of the Eucharist, the fact that He was to give His flesh and blood to be consumed, some of His disciples went away from Him; and when turning to the twelve, He asked, Will you also go away? we observe Peter replying for them all, with that faith and love which at all times so distinguished him, and exclaiming, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yes, while He was with them, they were content—they reposed in His love, they were enraptured by the delights of His sweet companionship. But they knew that He should die; for He had told them. He now announces it again, "A little while, and you shall not see me." But the pain caused by this announcement He immediately removed. "Again, a little while, and you shall see me."

Now, my brethren, I wish you to understand the full meaning of these few words, and in explaining them I am not so presumptuous as to interpret them according to my own judgment; but I give you the exposition of them approved by great Fathers and Doctors in the Church of

Christ. When Our Lord says, "A little while, and you shall not see me," He alludes to His ascension into heaven, by which He was to be removed from their sight; and when He adds, "Again, a little while, and you shall see me," He points to His coming in judgment on the last day. Meanwhile He foretold to them and us that His followers should lament and weep, while the "world," that is, they who would know Him or love Him not, "would rejoice." The world, the sinful, reckless world, would have its reward here in the pleasure of its own seeking, but for the faithful children of His Church, "their sorrow," at that second coming, "shall be turned into joy." "You indeed," during this sad pilgrimage of life, "have sorrow; but I will see you again. and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you." You will observe, in this interpretation of Our Blessed Saviour's words, a very striking, and, I might add, a most startling truth, and that is, that the whole time elapsing from His ascension into heaven until He comes to judge mankind, is described as "a little while"; in fact, that the same phrase precisely is used to designate both periods of time, the last weeks passed between His Last Supper and His Ascension, and the centuries which will roll from His Ascension unto His reappearance in the valley of Jehosaphat. For that little while the world will rejoice, for that little time the faithful children of Christ shall suffer. If, then, the thousands of years through which the world will last are called only "a little while," alas! how truly little is the whole of man's existence, the seventy or eighty years of troublous life in this world. Yet so it is. Few things are more clearly or frequently set forth in the Sacred Scriptures than the shortness of time, and of the life of man; "a thousand years in Thy sight,' says the psalmist, "are as yesterday which is past, and as a watch in the night. Things that are counted as nothing shall their years be. In the morning man shall grow up like grass; in the morning he shall flourish and pass away; in the evening he shall fall, grow dry and wither."

The Sacred Word now compares man's life to a breath, to a shadow, to a flower, to every type of evanescence, to every emblem of decay. "My days," exclaimed Job, "have been swifter than a post: they have fled away, and have not seen good, they have passed by, as ships carrying fruit, as an eagle flying to the prey." What then? is it better to join with the world in using time for pleasures that pass like a shadow, or to toil and labor, and, if necessary, to lament and weep, for that joy which will be imparted to us by the God of Love on His second coming, "when our hearts shall rejoice, and our joy no man shall take from us"? In a word, shall we spend our days as a sower might scatter chaff which is borne away by the wind, or shall we employ them in laying the seeds of good works to fructify unto everlasting life? That is the great question on which our whole happiness for time and eternity depends; and it is well that each one of us should this day answer it for himself.

In the first place, my brethren, consider that time is the price of eternity; if you spend your time well, you purchase an eternity of happiness; if you spend it ill, you purchase an eternity of woe. God created us for no other purpose than that we might love and serve Him all the days of our life. It was solely for this purpose that God created time; time is a gratuitous gift of His; He was not obliged to create any one of us. Had He so wished, we need never have been born. But He did create us that we might give glory to Him forever. And, alas! what was the first use of time made by man? The very first man that God ever created availed himself of time for the purpose of offending his Creator. At the moment that offense was committed, man lost the privilege of living; he sacrificed all right, such as it was, to enjoy one other second of time; and, by the inscrutable judgment of God, all mankind, even to the end of the world, were doomed, in penalty of his crime, to the same terrible privation. It was only by the blood of Jesus Christ that this sentence against man was blotted out; it was by His death that time was brought back for man. Our days and moments, therefore, are the first blessings that flow to us from the cross. The time which we foolishly squander away is the price of His blood, the fruit of His death, the reward of His sacrifice. More than that, by every sin we commit, we incur a fresh sentence of death, we sacrifice the privilege of life, of time; as often as God ceases to smite us with the death-stroke, we receive from Him a new life, that, by making proper use of so great a blessing, we may make reparation for our past criminal abuse of time. Every moment, then, we receive from God, after having sinned, is a new blessing from God, a continued miracle of His mercy and His love. Clearly, then, by squandering away those precious moments, to which we have no title, by devoting them to indolence and sin, we offer a grievous, wanton, deliberate insult to the great, the good, the just, the all-merciful God.

My brethren, with some Christians, the thought of the offense offered to God by sin is a motive sufficient to excite them to amendment; while others are not moved except by the consideration of its evil consequences to themselves. Let us, therefore, see what are the consequences entailed upon man by the misemployment of time. Time, I have said, was given to us by God for no other purpose than that, by using it properly, we might procure for ourselves an eternity of happiness hereafter. Any man, therefore, who neglects to avail himself of this inestimable blessing, practically says, I do not care for eternal happiness—I do not care to give glory to God. I am satisfied to be lost forever. What folly, what impiety can be more reprehensible than this? What would you say to a man of the world, who could, by a little industry, amass for himself a large fortune, but who preferred poverty and indolence to wealth and rational comfort? Would you not denounce him as a fool? And alas! what in comparison is the folly of him who, possessing an immortal soul, goes through life like the beast of the field, seeking only to gratify his animal propensities and passions, heedless of the future—the eternal future; born to an immortal crown, yet content to be a slave; heir to eternal glory, yet resigned to eternal damnation? And this is the folly you are all guilty of when you neglect to employ your time in the practice of piety and virtue. Every moment of time is more precious than treasures of gold. Many a man purchased an eternity of happiness by the proper use of one second of time; by yielding, in one second, to the grace of God; by a sudden conversion of his heart; by suffering a martyr's death; by the performance of one heroic act of love for his Maker: and those are the priceless moments the sinner squanders! Those moments will never return—once fled they are passed forever; and, what is more, for every moment man must render a strict account to his Eternal Judge on the last day.

These observations I make, my brethren, to show you the value of time. By making proper use of it we procure an eternity of bliss hereafter. See what happiness is conferred on man by the proper use of it, even here below! By employing our time according to the will of God, we fulfil the end of our creation, we give glory to God, we enrich our souls with virtues, we blot out the guilt of sin, and thus we are happy. God never intended that man should be unhappy. Being Himself a God of eternal and infinite goodness and love, it would be inconsistent with His nature to wish unhappiness to any of His creatures; and it will be found, if any one takes the trouble to search, that those only are miserable who live in the violation of His commandments, that is, who misemploy their time. The generality of men are unhappy because they do not understand the value of time, because they neglect to learn it. They seem to think that man was born to wretchedness and woe, and that the great object of his life should be to dissipate his thought from sadness, by spending his time in the pursuit of pleasure. They follow out their reasoning; they purchase it at the sacrifice of health, of wealth, of conscience, of reputation, of eternity. They traverse the whole world in pursuit of it, but alas! they find it not; for, to borrow the idea even of a heathen philosopher, the black phantom of care sits behind their saddle through every whirl of the chase. The end comes; they find they have been pursuing an *ignis fatuus*, while in the heaven above them the light of eternal peace and joy gleams with a mild and genial radiance, in which repose the elect of God, themselves descending to the regions of everlasting wretchedness and gloom.

On the other hand, what are the sensations of those who employ their time as God wills? Where shall we find them? Either in the turmoil of the world, or the seclusion of the cloister. In the world, the model man, who wins the admiration even of the vicious and depraved, is he, it matters not what may be his position in life, who keeps the commandments of God, who labors industriously at his occupation or profession, not to amass wealth, but to secure a competence for himself and his family; who does all he does for God's greater honor and glory. Think you not that man is happy? Aye, and you can never comprehend the peace and tranquillity of that man's mind until you go and do likewise.

Go to the cloister, where time is turned to its best account, where every moment transmutes a thought, word, or deed, into a golden merit, where indolence is unknown, and labor is the rule of life. Do we find happiness there? Oh! yes, as it is nowhere else to be found; pure, serene, and bright as a crystal river in the sunshine of heaven. Destitute of all good and enjoyment of this world, these humble souls may be supposed to be wretched; but no, their poverty, their meekness, and humility are the true source of their happiness. "Learn of me," says our Lord, "to be meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." Thus we find that whether in the world or the cloister, true happiness is only found in the practice of virtue and good works; in other words, the proper use of the great gift of time.

And yet this is the blessing which worldlings feel at so great a loss how to employ. So blind are they to the value of time, that they do not know what to do with it. They have invented various phrases to indicate what a burden it is. They ask, how shall we kill time? What shall we do with ourselves to-day? Time hangs heavy, they say, on their hands; they are bored for something to do; they suffer from ennui, they can do nothing; they wish it were to-morrow, next month, next summer or winter, when they might enjoy their favorite pastimes. Oh! my brethren, is this the language of Christians? Nothing to do! How many things has a Christian to do! Has he not to bless and praise God? to atone for his sins? to edify his neighbor? to succor the poor? to visit the sick and comfort the afflicted? and a thousand other proper and peculiar duties? The criminal who is sentenced to death knows the value of time! he is not at a loss how to employ it—for him the moments speed away with wings of lightning. He sits not down idly and listlessly, at a loss for occupation. Every second he turns to account—he prays and weeps, bewailing the manifold sinfulness of an ill-spent life, with tears of true repentance. So well does he understand the value of time that he would fain have more and more of it to pursue the good work o reconciliation with his offended God; but as his time is short and fixed, he makes up for its shortness by the intensity of his fervor; banishing all thoughts of the world, he lives only for repentance, for heaven, for God. This is the very light, my brethren, in which we ought to regard time, for we are all like that criminal, under sentence of death; the only difference being that while he is forewarned, we are uncertain of the hour of our departure: hence, like him, however, we know that our time is very, very short. Like him we are condemned for our crimes; we have thousands of sins to expiate, vices to cancel, and virtues to acquire. Were we assured that we should not die for a certain long time, we might postpone the hour of conversion, but alas, we know not when the fatal bolt may be launched from the hand of the Almighty; and we have it on the word of Our Blessed Lord Himself, that it shall come at the hour when we least expect it. Are we not then guilty of the most unpardonable folly in frittering away our precious time in crying out that it hangs heavily on our hands, that we do not know how to spend it, when we should, by proper use of it, be laying up for ourselves treasures of bliss for a never-ending eternity? Oh! let us not provoke by our indolence and sloth the Great Judge in whose hands is our eternal destiny, lest His justice triumph over His mercy, and He anticipate in His wrath the execution of the sentence which He only postpones in the infinite plenitude of His goodness and His love.

Nevertheless, my brethren, let no one imagine that we are bound to spend every moment of our time in the exercise of prayer or devotion. Such a thing would be impossible to man, and God does not exact it. There are times when the body needs repose, and the mind relaxation; and these, so far from being a waste of time, are frequently a duty which it would be even sinful to neglect. Recreation and innocent amusement are, in fact, necessary, because they enable one to pursue with greater facility the serious works imposed by social or religious obligations. But the great mistake men commit is, that they make amusement the principal, and sometimes the sole end and aim of their existence; they live to eat, to idle, to read frivolous books, to dress for admiration, to move in the circles of fashion, to visit and be visited, to win praise, honors, titles, to kill time, and laugh, as they say, the weary hours away. Each pursues his own favorite pleasure, that is, indulges his own favorite passions. Each falls down and adores the idol himself has made, while the true God who created him is ignored, dishonored, insulted, and despised.

Oh! then, my brethren, think, ere it is too late, of the great interests involved for you in the employment of time. Do you wish to be happy here? Spend your time well. Do you wish to love and be loved by

God? Use the time He has given you as it ought to be used. It requires no great effort; it only requires that whatever you do, whether you eat, drink, or sleep, you should do all for the honor and glory of God, and in the name of Jesus Christ. Have you misspent the past? It is not too late to begin. Why stand you all the day idle? Know you not that he who comes at the eleventh hour receives the same reward as he who worked all day? Work, then, ere the night comes when no man can work. Work for God; and He who never belied His promise will be your eternal reward. Blessed is the servant whom when his Master comes, He shall find watching. Amen, I say to you, He will place him over all His possessions.

SERMON ON HUMAN RESPECT.

> "Now, when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to Him: 'Art thou He that art to come, or look we for another?' And Jesus making answer said to them: 'Go and relate to John what you have seen and heard, the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me.'" Words read in the Gospel of this day.—MATTHEW ii. 2, and following verse.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—It is to the concluding words of this text that I would invite your particular attention on this evening—"Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me." After all the miracles our Blessed Redeemer had wrought, after He had made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dead to rise again, He yet anticipates that many shall be scandalized at His doctrine and at His life; that the stranger to His creed shall blush to embrace the gospel of the cross; that many of His own pretended followers shall be ashamed of the poverty of Bethlehem, and the ignominy of Calvary; and so strongly does He feel for the disgraceful weak-mindedness and sinfulness of such unhappy men, that He promises an eternal reward to such as shall escape the snares to which they have fallen victims: "Blessed," He says, "is he that shall not be scandalized in me." Nor were His anticipations unfounded, for St. Paul laments that the doctrine of Christ crucified should be unto the Jews indeed "a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness." But why recur to St. Paul for a proof of the existence of such weakness and folly, when we see the same vices exhibiting every day under our own eyes? We see men of large intellect and cultivated minds hesitating to enter the fold of the true Church, although convinced of its Divine institution, hesitating lest, by taking this final step, they may forsooth incur the indignation of their friends, the contempt of their associates, the loss of their temporal dignity or possessions; they are scandalized in Jesus Christ. We see amongst the children of the Church many who are Catholics by the accident of faith or of early training, but who, led away by pride, by human respect, by shame of the heretic or unbeliever, blush to profess openly that faith in which they inwardly believe; they join in the scoff and the jeer with which religion and its Founder and its ministers are ridiculed; they argue on the doubts and re-echo the sophisms invented by conscience, that would fain slumber in the belief that no God exists; they fear if they make the sign of the cross, or pray with exterior devotion, that the smile or the jest may be raised at their expense; afraid on the one hand to displease their friends and incur their censure; and, on the other, afraid lest they may bring down on their unhappy souls the indignation of that God whom they insult by such wanton cowardice and such miserable shame.

Indeed there are few of us, my brethren, who are not occasionally the victims of human respect. We sometimes fear man more than God. In order, therefore, that we may correct this vicious tendency, and that we may merit the approbations of Him who has said, "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me," let us consider first, the insult that is offered to the majesty of God by human respect, and then the folly and impropriety of suffering ourselves to be influenced in any part of our conduct by the fears of what the world may think or say concerning us.

1. Dearly beloved brethren, we were placed by Almighty God in this world for no other purpose than that we might love and serve Him with our whole hearts, and with our whole souls. This is the duty of every human being, no matter in what age he may exist, no matter for what greatness or lowliness, for what riches or poverty he may be distinguished. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." This is the great commandment addressed by God alike to all men. Any man, therefore, and much more, any Christian, who through fear or shame of his fellow-man, neglects, when occasion requires, to manifest his love for God, or for his neighbor, offers a deliberate insult to the majesty of his Creator; he prefers the esteem of his fellow-man to the esteem of God; he apprehends the sneer or the contempt of some imbecile fellow-creature, and dreads not the anger of the Almighty; he abides by the judgment of the world in preference to the judgment of the great and living God. All created things united together bear no comparison to God, and yet the victim of human respect prefers the opinion of one miserable fraction of humanity to the opinion of the mighty Lord of Heaven, by whose breath all created things sprang into existence. What greater insult than this could be offered to God?

He who is unduly influenced by human respect transfers the allegiance he owes to God to every human being who may claim it, be he heretic or infidel; he is thus reduced to a most miserable slavery; for the ordinary condition of the slave is to have but one master, whereas the victim of human respect has as many masters as he has associates whose approbation he seeks, whose anger or censure he dreads, whose sneer or derision he is careful to escape. Such a total and capricious sacrifice of one's own conscientious convictions is nothing short of blank idolatry; for what else is idolatry but transferring our homage from the Creator to the creature? Nay, the idolater has some excuse, for he professes to act according to his conscience, although that conscience is misguided; but the slave of human respect acts against his conscience—he does exactly what he knows to be wrong, he knows how damnation is incurred, and he wantonly incurs it. How forcibly does such prevarication remind us of the language in which the Royal Prophet denounces the idols of his day: "They have mouths and speak not, they have feet and walk not, they have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not."

Those who are influenced by human respect have tongues that utter no sentiments but those which others may applaud; they have ears that watch to catch the floating opinion of the crowd, that their own may be found according to the vulgar standard; they have eyes that see not their own contemptible subserviency, and their own wretched degradation; they have feet that walk not in the ways of God, but follow in the wake of those that insult and deride Him. Shameful servitude! infinitely more degrading than any physical bondage to which poverty or even crime subjects the outcast of society or the victims of the law.

One case, in which human respect most commonly exercises its pernicious influence is, where a man has been in the pursuit of sin for years, and who is now sincerely desirous to return to God, but who is deterred from the work of conversion by the fear that his new conversion of life may excite the ridicule of those with whom he had been associated in his former career of vice. What an insult does this wretched man offer to God by his despicable fears and miserable apprehensions! He knows that he ought to return to God; that, though late his return, yet God receives the sinner at any hour: he knows that sin brings nothing to the soul but disappointment, sorrow, and anguish; that it is better now to brave all difficulties and turn his thoughts heavenward, where alone true peace and comfort are to be found; his mind is made up; farewell sin, welcome God; but he just then remembers how he must forsake his bad companions; how he must not now sit long and drink deep as of old; how the blasphemous exclamations and obscene jest must henceforward be met with a frown instead of a smile; how his penitent air will afford his boon companions an occasion for ribald mirth and sarcastic joking; how he must absent himself from the jovial gathering to pray, or to confess, or to receive the Body of His Lord, and how his absence will be remarked, and many a scurrillous comment greet his return to the festive throng. The temptation is too strong; his self-love is too deeply rooted; he gives up the idea of conversion for some other occasion, which, like the *ignis fatuus,* is always present to his views, but is constantly receding before him; he returns to his old haunts and his old fellow-sinners; he relapses into all his former vices with a renovated zest, and pursues damnation with an energy and zeal that, if turned in the opposite direction, would earn for him a martyr's crown, and a martyr's everlasting glory. What an insult does this miserable man offer to God! he prefers the esteem of some few sinful, misguided men to the esteem and friendship of his Great Creator!

But the insult to God is scarcely less reprehensible than the folly and impropriety of those who allow themselves to be influenced in religious matters by human respect. For such persons seek to meet by their conduct the approval of all those with whom they come in contact. Now, this is perfectly impossible, for, live as you please, lead a life of virtue or of sin, and you cannot. Do your best, conciliate the esteem and approval of all men; if you are virtuous, the wicked will sneer at and deride you, no matter how they may internally approve; if you are wicked and worldly, the virtuous and good will pity and reprove you. Since, therefore, you cannot be commended by all mankind, why not prefer the approbation of the good, especially as your own conscience internally approves the verdict they pronounce? It is impossible that men should all agree in any one point; their passions and prejudices will always prevent a cordial union of their opinions. Do you seek to amalgamate elements essentially discordant? You care not for the observations of men in the ordinary transactions of life. Why will you pay them such deference when the great question of your eternal salvation is at stake? Suppose all the world condemned your conduct, what matters it to you when God approves? Men will pass away, and God remains. "What art thou," says the Prophet Isaiah, "that thou should be afraid of a mortal man, and of the son of man, who shall wither away like grass?" Why not choose rather the spirit of the penitent Daniel? "I covered my soul with fasting; and it was made a reproach to me; and I made haircloth my garments, and I became a by-word to them. They that sat in the gate spoke against me, and they that drank wine made me there sing." But how was the royal penitent affected by the contempt of his enemies? "As for me," he says, "my prayer is to Thee, O Lord." How different also was the feeling of the Apostle Paul. "With me it is a very small thing to be judged by you," he says to the Corinthians, and what was his glory? "I will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." Our Divine Redeemer Himself gives us a striking example of the boldness and constancy with which we should confess our faith before men. When asked by Caiphas whether the accusations of those who were suborned against Him were true or false, He answers nothing; but when adjured by the name of the living God to confess if He were indeed the Son of God, see how, in reference to that holy name, He makes a full and candid confession of the truth, teaching all His followers to imitate His example, and never to be ashamed of their holy faith. Little did the early martyrs care for human respect; they left their weeping friends behind; they heeded not the sighs of an infidel father, or a pagan mother; they turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of friends, who thought them little less than mad; they went forward boldly to their doom, and with smiles on their lips, and hope beaming in their eyes, they bedewed the scaffold or the circus with their blood, while their souls passed triumphant before the throne of the Eternal God!

In fact, the approval of the world is the best proof that a man's conduct is not conformable to religion, nor pleasing to the Almighty, and the condemnation of the world is the very recompense of virtue, and the most indubitable proof of its sincerity. The views of the world, and those of God, are diametrically opposed to each other; what the world approves, God condemns. The piety of him who is praised by the world must be always suspected. "If you had been of the world," says our Divine Redeemer, "the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." You heeded not the opinions of the world when you walked in the ways of sin; is it rational to fear them when you walk in the paths of virtue? Ah! are you timid and ashamed when invited to give glory to the Lord of all? Of whom then are you ashamed? Do you blush to give glory to God, who created all things?—who, in the language of the Psalmist, "is clothed with light as with a garment, who stretcheth out the heavens as a pavilion, who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the winds." Do you blush to be the disciple of Him who rescued you from eternal damnation, and restored you to the eternal inheritance you had lost?—who, though born in a stable, and crucified as a criminal, has monarchs for His slaves, and the world for His worshippers? Are you ashamed of His teaching, who abstracting altogether from His Divine character, is confessed by all to have preached the most sublime philosophy ever propounded to man? Do you blush to follow the standard of the cross, which has acquired more signal victories than the united dynasties of the universe? Do you regret being a member of that Church which has lasted two thousand years, and which is sure to last forever—which comprises in its folds all the power, and splendor, and genius, and glory of the world? and do you side with those who cry up the glory of a creed of mushroom growth, and a Church of mushroom endurance? If such be your feelings—cold, weak, base-hearted Christian—well do you deserve to hear the sentence of Jesus: "He that shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He shall come in His majesty, and that of His Father, and of the Holy angels." If such weakness excites our pity, what shall be our admiration for the man who, when occasion requires, stands up for his insulted religion, and who, in the presence of bigotry and ignorance, no matter how fortified by wealth and power, with courage in his heart, and fire on his tongue, proclaims the glories of his Church, and, like a good soldier, fights her battles when cowards cringe and skulk away!

Although human respect, my brethren, thus produces a thousand evils, nevertheless I would not have you to believe that we are always bound to profess our faith openly, and to display our religion before society or the world. There is a time for everything, and it would be indecorous, it would savor of hypocrisy and affectation, constantly and without a proper opening to parade our sanctity before the public. But when the occasion offers, then to hold back were unworthy of a man and of a Christian: if our conscience dictate to us that we should pursue a certain line of conduct, and we are tempted by shame to forego its dictate, we are bound to trample on that shame, and act as our conscience suggest, with confidence and courage; otherwise we do not deserve the name of soldiers, but rather the ignominious appellation of deserter of Jesus Christ.

Behold the lamentable example of St. Peter yielding to human respect. He who was so confident of his courage and fidelity, at the voice of a girl, denies, and swears as he denies, that he knows the very face of his Redeemer. Oh! bitter scandal; but would to God we could all repent as St. Peter repented! See how Pontius Pilate, although convinced of the innocence of our Saviour, yet, through human respect, imbrues his hands in that Saviour's sacred blood; proving to us that human respect was to a great extent the immediate cause of our Redeemer's death. He declared he found no cause of death in Him; and, though the people assembling tumultuously insisted on our Saviour's condemnation, Pilate still persisted in the resolution of not staining his hands with innocent blood. But no sooner was human respect called in to support the unjust demand, and the people intimated to Pilate that he might incur the indignation of Cæsar, than he immediately yielded up the cause; fear got the better of any other consideration; human respect dictated the sentence; hatred and fury carried it into execution.

Tremble, therefore, my brethren, at the fatal consequences of acting according to the standard of human respect; it is a subject we seldom think on, but we now see what mischief and what scandal it produces. I repeat, we are all influenced by human respect, more or less, at various times; let us be more watchful for the future. Let us remember the denunciations of Jesus Christ against the victims of this fatal weakness: "He who shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." On the other hand, let us remember the reward He has promised to those who profess their faith openly and courageously before the world: "He who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven." What matter to you the scoff or the sneer of the infidel or the lukewarm Christian? "If God is for us, who is against us?" There is nothing so truly contemptible as to see a Christian sneering at the religion he himself professes. If there be anything more contemptible than that, it is to see another Christian seeking the applause of such a religious scoffer. Let us, therefore, beg of God to fill our hearts with the courage of His Martyrs and Saints, that we may never blush for the gospel of Christ; that we may never give way to pride, except to be proud of our title of Christians, as a patent of the highest nobility; that we may, like St. Paul, "glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." Jesus died on the cross; let us be prepared to die in its defense. Let us remember that we are soldiers of Christ, and that the good soldier would sooner see his heart's blood flowing than have his honor tarnished. Fighting the battle of the Lord during life, we shall deserve to receive an unfading crown from Him hereafter, who has said, "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me."

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SERMON ON PRAYER.

"At that time Jesus said to His disciples, In that day you shall not ask me anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you," etc., etc.—JOHN xvi. 23, *et seq.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—We are all aware that the sole object of our existence upon earth is to live so that we may be happy with God for all eternity. But do we ever reflect that, if left to our own resources, this eternity of bliss is perfectly impossible of attainment? Abandoned to himself, man's condition would be infinitely worse than that of the brute creation; for the brute obeys his instincts, dies, and exists no more; but man, whose soul is immortal, if left to his own guidance, following his animal instinct, would walk with his eyes open into the abyss of eternal woe. Since the fall of Adam, man's condition upon earth is the most pitiful that can be well imagined. His reason, that glorious faculty which was once a bright beacon, guiding him safely over a tranquil sea, became obscured by the clouds of sin, and sheds a doubtful, flickering ray which he can never securely follow again. His intellect, once a bright, clear atmosphere through which that beacon-light of reason shone, became thick with the mists of ignorance, with the vapors of prejudice and error; the world was once for him a serene, unruffled sea over which he glided smoothly and unwaveringly toward the destined shore; but alas! the storms of temptations, and the tempest of passion have aroused that slumbering ocean; the billows of sin beset the hapless voyager, until without light to direct him, enveloped in gloom, and tossed by the surges of an angry sea, he pursues a trackless course, drifting he knoweth not whither, and is dashed at length on the merciless coast, or swept into the fathomless depths forever. But what a consolation has poor fallen man, that lone wanderer upon earth, in these dear words which I have read for you! Of himself, he can do nothing; aided by God he can accomplish all things. "Amen, amen, I say to you," says Christ, "if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you: ask and receive that your joy may be full." If you cry out to Him from the depths, He will hear your voice; if you ask Him for light to direct your wandering course, He will shed it around you in abundance; for, "every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of light"—if, like Peter, you cry out to Him from the swelling waves, "Lord, save us, we perish!" although you deserve to hear the reproachful reply, "O thou of little faith," yet the storm will cease, and a sweet refreshing calm ensue.

In a word, prayer is, if not the greatest, at least one of the greatest means of man's salvation. We obtain nothing from God without prayer; by virtue of prayer we are made sharers of every blessing which heaven can bestow. He who does not pray is doomed to perish, while the man of prayer shall live with God forever. Such being the importance of this duty, it is the dearest interest of every one of us to consider how we ought to pray, in order that God may give ear to our petition. I will, therefore, point out to you the conditions which God requires to render our prayers acceptable to Him; but first, it would be well to consider the necessity and excellence of prayer, in order that we may more fully appreciate an obligation so intimately wound up with our eternal welfare.

Our first and chief duty upon earth is to praise and glorify God. This we do by prayer; for prayer is not only a petition to God for His favors, but an expression of homage to His Eternal Majesty. Thus, the first petition of the Lord's prayer, that prayer prescribed for man's use by our Blessed Lord Himself, begs that the name of God may be blest by all His creatures: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." It being, therefore, a constant duty of ours to bless and praise God, we are clearly bound at all times to pray, if not with the language of our lips, at least with the homage of our hearts. For this reason, our Blessed Lord says that "we should always pray." We are all subjects of God; he who does not pray proclaims his independence of his Creator, and, as he goes through life without recognizing God, so, when he dies, God will not recognize him, but cast him forever from His sight. Unless we pray, we can never escape the dangers that beset us in this miserable life. How can we resist temptation? how can we bear our sufferings and crosses? how can we conquer the devil and our passions, which hold perpetual siege against our souls? How, except by prayer? "Watch and pray," says Christ, "that you enter not into temptation." How can he who leaves his house in the morning, as a beast leaves his lair, without ever lifting his eyes to heaven, expect that God will protect him from the dangers that surround humanity in this daily turmoil of life? and how can he who lays his head at night upon his pillow, without invoking the protection of the Lord, expect that his eyes shall ever again behold the gladdening rays of the morning sun? Prayer is necessary, because without it we can do absolutely nothing conducive to salvation. For this we have the words of Christ Himself: "Without me," says He, "you can do nothing." It is so essentially necessary, that the want of it cannot be supplied by any other act of religion. Baptism is necessary to salvation, but its want can be supplied by martyrdom. Penance is necessary to those who have fallen into mortal sin, and yet the soul may be saved by perfect contrition. Those who are unable to fast may have the obligation set aside, or commuted; those who cannot give alms to the poor, owing to their poverty, may save their souls by patience and resignation; but nothing can supply the place of prayer. It is utterly indispensable to salvation; for we cannot be saved without the grace of God, and, without prayer, that grace cannot possibly be obtained.

Prayer, then, being so necessary to salvation, God, in His infinite goodness and love, has extended the faculty of praying to every member of the human race, on whose soul has dawned the light of reason. Prayer is not an operation which only the talented or learned may perform; it requires no effort of genius, no intellectual cultivation; it is not a science to be learned from men, nor an art that is to be acquired from books or study; it is the simple language of the heart, the impulsive utterance of the soul; the knowledge of it is instilled into our very being; the rules of it are engraved on the heart; and the only Master who can teach it is the Holy Spirit of God. The child on his mother's knee pours forth his lisping prayer, which wells up like the fountain, springing unto life eternal, from a heart pure, innocent, and guileless. That unpretending outgushing of the infant soul may be worded in language the simplest, the most unadorned, but it is, nevertheless, borne as a priceless treasure, by angels, before the throne of the Most High, where it ranks with the richest offerings that have been presented by hoary-headed monks, from studious cloisters, or by practiced chanters in cathedral choirs. The untaught savage, who roams the desert, ignorant of God, yet conscious by nature that some great eternal Being, dwelling beyond the clouds, is the master of his destiny, kneels and prays before the Mighty Unseen One, as he thinks Him, represented by the all-pervading sun, or typified by the mild, beneficent, and gentle stars. The unlettered shepherd, herding his flocks upon the mountain side, utters his unvarnished prayer to the Most High, with a heart sincere and pure, and that simple ejaculatory outpouring of an innocent soul is heard in the courts of heaven, and the humble postulant is enriched with grace; while the well-worded, elegant, and high-sounding orison of the educated, but tepid, worshipper only moves to indignation the God whom it appears intended to propitiate. Thus nothing is easier than prayer. "The commandment that I command thee this day," said the Lord to the Israelites, "is not above thee, nor far from thee, nor is it in heaven, to bring it to us, and we may hear and fulfil it in work. Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayest do it. Excuse thyself and say, which of us can cross the sea, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do that which is commanded? But the Word is very nigh to thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." The proud and long-winded prayer of the Pharisee is despised, while the simple "God be merciful to me a sinner" of the publican pierces the clouds, and brings down upon him a flood of grace from the throne of God. Prayer is not only necessary, but it is most excellent and useful to man; by it we honor and glorify God, for prayer is an indication of religion, and is compared in sacred saints' times to incense: "Let my prayer," says the Psalmist, "ascend like incense in Thy sight." By prayer we proclaim ourselves the servants of God; we own our subjection to that Almighty Master; we acknowledge Him to be the Author of all good; we look to Him as our only refuge from danger, our only solace in tribulation, our only hope both for time and for eternity. "Call upon me," says He, "in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." The prayer of the just man is the key of heaven, it unlocks the treasures of God's graces and mercies. "Prayer ascends," says St. Augustine, "and mercy descends; high as are the heavens, and low as is the earth, God hears the voice of man." By it every virtue is confirmed in the soul; every assault of the enemy is repulsed; every pang soothed, every sorrow dispelled, every joy infused: "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." By prayer charity is influenced; the soul becomes enamored of her God; recognizes Him as the Author of every good, she embraces Him with the most devoted love. Thus, holding a sweet and frequent intercourse with Him, she soon experiences an exquisite sense of delight; she tastes and sees how sweet is the Lord; yes, sweeter beyond comparison than the liveliest imagination can portray, or the most earnest yearning of the heart can covet or desire. There is, in fact, nothing that we may not receive from God by prayer; no grace, no favor, no blessing. "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." "If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you."

Seeing, therefore, the necessity and utility of prayer, it is clearly our dearest interest to know how we should pray, in order that our prayers may be acceptable with God, and in order that we may obtain from Him those graces which may enable us to work out the work of our salvation.

My brethren, in order that our prayers may be acceptable to God, certain conditions are absolutely necessary. Of these conditions, those which are indispensable are humility, faith, confidence, and perseverance; and there is not the slightest doubt that it is owing to the want of these conditions our prayers are unheard, and our petitions unheeded by God. We should pray with humility—that is to say, with a thorough conviction of our utter unworthiness to appear before God, or to receive any favor of His hands; with deep humiliation, considering the weakness of our nature, and the multitude of our sins; and with a heartfelt sorrow for having ever displeased the Sovereign Majesty of our Creator. "Before prayer," says the wise man, "prepare the soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God"; for what else is it but tempting God, to kneel in the attitude of homage, and yet feel only sentiments of rebellion; to ask with the lips what the heart does not desire; to utter the language of sorrow, and still feel a lust for the sinful pleasures of the world? To such prayers God will have no regard; it is only the prayer of humility that He respects. "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble, and He hath not despised their petition"; yea, saith the Psalmist, "the prayer of him who humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." The bold, unblushing, self-reliant Pharisee comes to the church unheeded; but the humble, contrite, prostrate publican goes down into his house justified rather than the other; for "every one who exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted." Let no man think that his prayer will be heard as long as he feels a passion for sin; to such persons the Lord says, by the mouth of Isaiah, His prophet, "When you stretch forth your hands I will turn away my eyes from you, and when you multiply prayer I will not hear." To those whose breasts rankle with the venom of unforgiveness, God denies their entreaties; and he, therefore, who would be heard, must first learn to love his neighbor, and pardon the injuries or insults he may have received: "When you shall stand to pray," says Christ, "forgive, if you have anything against any man; for if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your sins." A spirit of humility, therefore, and of all its cognate virtues of contrition, of patience, of resignation, and forgiveness, is the first, and perhaps most essential, condition of prayer; "for God," says St. James, "resisteth the proud, and giveth His grace to the humble."

We must also pray with faith, believing firmly in God's power and willingness to grant our petition. This condition is absolutely necessary, in order that our prayers may be heard; for how can we address God, unless we believe in Him? "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" says St. Paul. "All things," says Christ, "whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." How, indeed, can he expect to obtain anything from God, who either doubts God's power, or believes that God may not grant his request? If such a man would obtain anything from God, he must cease to doubt, he must enliven his faith in God, he must adopt the advice of St. James, "Let him ask in faith nothing wavering." We must also pray with confidence. We must be convinced that God will hear our prayers. If we have not this confidence, we make God a liar; for even in the words of my text, our Blessed Redeemer says, "If you ask anything in my name of the Father, He will give it you"; but he who does not confide in God's word thinks that God will or may refuse something, notwithstanding His promises. Whenever our Saviour performs a miracle, by restoring a person to life or health, He generally also forgives the person his sins; but almost invariably, on such occasions, He applauds the confidence of those who were so favored. "Have confidence, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And for this confidence have the best and the most unshakable grounds; for "if any man sin," says St. John, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, and He is the propitiation for our sins." Our confidence should be also increased by the consideration that it is the Holy Ghost inspires our prayers, under whose guiding influence they cannot fail to be heard; because St. Paul assures us, "He asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." Last of all, we should pray with perseverance. Many persons, after praying for some time, grow weary when their petitions are not heard, and give up the task in despair. They appoint a time for God to hear them, and if the favor is not granted at the time prescribed, they desist from what they consider a useless importunity of the Most High. They think not that, perhaps, their motives are not pure; that their request is, perhaps, unreasonable; that God wishes to try their patience; that it is through love for them He refuses what may tend rather to their destruction than to their salvation. Whether you obtain your request or not, always supposing that it is a lawful request, never desist from prayer. This is the advice of the wisest of men: "Let nothing," says he, "hinder thee from praying always; and be not afraid to be justified even to death, for the reward of God continueth forever." "We ought always pray," says Christ, "and not to faint"; and "pray without ceasing" is the earnest exhortation of St. Paul. The blind beggar, who met our Saviour on the road to Jericho, was not restored to sight the first time he cried out, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!" No, but when he raised his voice higher, and redoubled his power, his unwearied perseverance became a kind of violence that moved the Lord to enlighten the eyes both of his soul and body. Perseverance is, indeed, the condition of prayer, because it is the greatest test of the sincerity of him who prays; and proves to God that, no matter how often he is rebuffed, he still has confidence enough to pray; still faith enough to believe in the honor and goodness of his Creator.

My brethren, it only remains for me earnestly to exhort you to be fervent and diligent in the holy exercise of prayer. If you wish to enjoy in this life spiritual peace, and in the next eternal happiness with God, in this valley of tears, prayer is to us a means of the sweetest consolation, a never-failing source of purest joy. By its magical power every sorrow is dispelled from the soul, and a foretaste of celestial bliss infused; it is the precious metal which turns into gold all the ore of feeling, that lies buried in the inmost recesses of the mind. Where all is dark, it diffuses a radiance mellow and serene; where all is bitter, it sheds an elixir of entrancing sweetness; where all is cold, it breathes a warm glow of love; not that love which, like all things on earth, blooms for a while, and perishes forever; but that love which, though it buds in the soul on earth, yet blossoms in heaven, to fade no more. And, oh! how wretched, how pitiable is the lot of him who neglects this saving exercise—who casts into the deep this sweet anchor of his hope!

In this world we live as exiles, banished from our native land, feeding upon the husks of swine, in poverty, anguish, and distress; our hearts ever yearning for that happy land, where alone their throbbing can be stilled, where every craving may be gratified, where every thirst may be quenched with the waters of eternal life, and our hunger appeased by participation in the plenty of our Father's house. If we are content with our lot, if we hug our chains, if we prefer bondage to freedom, and exile in a foreign land to the free enjoyment of our own, our misery is, indeed, unspeakable. But we have a merciful King, to whom the vilest outcast from His dominion may address his petition for freedom, with a perfect assurance that, not only will his prayer be presented to the throne of God, but receive a favorable hearing; that his petition for liberation shall be granted, and then he shall be restored to the home for which his heart is breaking; that there he shall meet the loving father or the tender mother, who sweetened his woes even in this vale of tears; that he shall there embrace, after an absence of years, the child of his bosom, whom he fancied he should never behold again; that their weeping and sorrow shall be no more, for "the former things have passed away"; that joy then, and only joy, shall prevail in this region of endless delights. If any one who knew that by a simple petition he could procure for himself this termination of his woes, and the enjoyment of those eternal pleasures, neglected to employ such easy means for his deliverance, would you not consider him mad? Would his fate any longer move you to pity; would it excite one sympathetic emotion to learn that, after his exile here, from which he might have been so easily released, he is now cast into that dungeon of eternal darkness and woe, whose gates are never opened, and through whose walls the light of God's countenance shall never shed one cheering ray, through all the countless ages of eternity! Oh! then, my brethren, if you hope for salvation, pray, and pray well, pray with the conditions I have pointed out; with faith, believing that God not only can, but will, hear your entreaties, for Christ our Lord has said, that "all things are possible to him that believeth." "Amen," said he, "I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatever he sayeth shall be done, it shall be done unto him." I say unto you, all things whatsoever you shall ask, when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they will come unto you. Pray with confidence, knowing that if you ask your father for bread he will not give you a stone; with humility, like that of Abraham when he said, "Shall I presume to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes?" and with perseverance, like that of David, who has said, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always in my mouth." Praying thus, you shall bring down from heaven the showers of God's graces upon your souls, which will sweeten all the toils of life, and prepare you for the enjoyment of eternal bliss, in that happy land where you shall have no further need of prayer, and where every utterance of the soul shall be an outpouring of love, of praise, and jubilation to the Most High, forever and forever.

SERMON ON THE PASSION.

"He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins."—ISAIAS lix. 5.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :—Forty days of penitential mourning have nearly passed away, and heaven and earth with universal accord will soon sing forth their hymns and canticles, and alleluias of joy. Forty days will but have just expired since the words of Joel were ringing in our ears, exhorting us to be converted to the Lord in fasting, in mourning, and in weeping, and soon the Church of God will resound with hosannas to the Highest in commemoration of the greatest miracle Omnipotence hath ever yet achieved ; yet, of those forty days of sorrow and of tears, the fragment that remains is the saddest, the darkest, the bitterest of all. Could you at this moment cast your eyes round about the world, you would see the altars of the Lord no more adorned with that pomp and magnificence her children love to shed around them ; but stripped of their decorations, their gems, and their flowers, and looking cold and dreary to the Christian eye. You would see those proud temples raised to the Almighty in foreign lands, where His glories are sung and His name is adored by faithful millions, no longer displaying to the enchanted vision the choicest graces of architectural splendor, but hung from roof to floor in the dark drapery of funeral sorrow. The thrilling tones of solemn bells swell not now from the lofty spires and steeples ; hushed are the melodious sounds of exultant music through their spacious aisles ; and the voices of His ministers, who, but a few months since, sung anthems of praise and joy for the nativity of the Babe in Bethlehem, now chant in plaintive chorus the inspired language of woe in celebration of the last melancholy mystery of our redemption. The Church of God is oppressed with sorrow and gloom, " weeping," as the prophet laments, " She hath wept the night, and the tears are on her cheeks ; there is none to comfort her amongst all that are dear to her ; her children multiply their fasts and austerities ; they send forth to heaven more ardent prayers, and mingle tears with the expressions of gratitude and praise." Oh ! could we at this moment pierce the privacy of many a lonely cell and chamber, how many devoted worshippers should we behold pressing to their lips the sign of our redemption, and bedewing the sacred emblem with tears the brightest and dearest mortal man can shed.

But why this voice of universal woe, why this mourning and weeping in the Church of God? It is because she commemorates on this day the bitter Passion and ignominious death of her own beloved Spouse, Jesus Christ, the only Son of the living God. It is because she looks back beyond the last eighteen hundred years, and sees with weeping eyes the Divine Saviour of men hanging like a malefactor between two thieves on a disgraceful cross, with a crown of thorns upon His head, with cruel nails bored through His sacred hands and feet, with His tender flesh bruised and scored in every limb, with that blood which rescued a world from damnation, welling in streams from His sacred veins, and with a rabble crowd of infuriated monsters pouring out against Him all the venom of insult and malice that rancor could suggest or ribaldry interpret. It is because she feels, with sensations of the bitterest affliction, that it is the iniquities of her own children that have brought her beloved Jesus from the glories of heaven to the ignominy of Calvary; that it is they who have pierced those hands and feet, and sent the blood gushing from every sacred pore; in fine, it is because she seeks, with tears of penitential sorrow, to soothe the anger of heaven excited against sinful man, and to implore that He "who was wounded for our iniquities, who was bruised for our sins," would, on this, the anniversary of His death, impart to us that mercy and pardon which He lived and died to purchase from His Heavenly Father for us all.

If we wish, my brethren, to participate in the benefits acquired for us by the sufferings of our beloved Saviour, let us, in God's name, this night join with our holy mother the Church in contemplating with deep sorrow for our sins the tragic drama of the Passion, the unspeakable horrors of Calvary, where Jesus died amidst the shouts and insults of the traitorous Jews.

Were we, my brethren, to trace the entire course of that bitter Passion, from the first pang of agony in the garden of Gethsemani, to the last expiring sigh on Calvary, and dwell on that tender love manifested for us in every throb of that Sacred Heart the morning's sun should rise, and find our task unfinished. For, that the great God who exists from all eternity, and who shall exist beyond the stretch of human fancy; who was infinitely happy in Himself, and whose glory no shadow of pain could for a moment cloud; whose omnipotence can call worlds into existence, and crush them again into their original nothing—that He should come down from His eternal throne, and, like an outcast from the race of men, should suffer such anguish as all that man ever endured could never equal, and all this to rescue from perdition even the souls of His executioners—is a mystery of love which His own infinite conception alone can embrace. Hence we must be content with viewing that boundless love as it shines forth for us in the mere remarkable features of His Passion, and still feel assured that we have only glanced over the surface, and not fathomed its unfathomable depths.

Before our Divine Redeemer's sufferings had yet in all their intensity commenced, we behold Him performing a most stupendous miracle of love for us, as a prelude to the love displayed on the bloody hill of Calvary. We see Him seated amongst His chosen twelve (the dearest children of His bosom, from whom He was so soon to be torn by His enemies), and there leaving them, and by them to the world, His own body and blood as a pledge of His everlasting love for man. Oh! who can fathom the depth of this our Jesus' love for us, the very night of His Passion; the night when He was to feel the lonely horrors of Gethsemani; the night that He was to be betrayed by one who sat at that sacred table; the night when He was to be kicked and buffeted, and spat upon in Caiphas' hall; the night that Peter was to swear he never knew Him! That then He should have no other thought but man's happiness and man's glory, exceeds, indeed, all human power to conceive; yet so it was. He then thought, my brethren, of you and of me, as if you and I were alone in the world. He thought of the weary days of our lonely exile, how, wandering through this vale of tears, our souls should sigh, with their heaven-born instinct, for the good things of Sion; how, sick and faint, they should totter on the way, unless refreshed by the manna of life, not by "the food that perisheth"; and thus He bequeathed to us that bread which angels dare not taste, to strengthen us in our journey to the land where we expect, let us hope not in vain, to be filled for eternity with the plenty of His Father's house.

And now, Christian soul, come with me. Let us go forth through the darkness of the night from the hum and bustle of Jerusalem, and crossing the brook Cedron, let us wend our way through the olive groves that lie beyond. There is the place called Gethsemani; it is lonely and silent, and the night wind sighs but faintly through the melancholy trees; the stars are shut out, and the spot so interwoven with the destinies of mankind is given over to gloom and desolation. Prostrate on the earth, with His hands clasped in a paroxysm of woe, sad and alone, His long hair hanging in damp and disordered curls over His shoulders, and huge drops of blood starting from His pallid face, lies a human being, human to all appearances; with the form of mankind, with its physical weakness and more than its share of hereditary sorrow; for in the annals of human suffering, we hear not of any, save Him, from whose brow grief ever forced that sanguinary exponent of its bitterness and its intensity, now appealing to heaven in superhuman fervidness of entreaty; now downcast, horror-stricken, inconsolable, yet all-sustaining; a Being placed, one would imagine, beyond the range of mercy or compassion, the butt of all the arrows of misery, and the victim of innumerable death-agonies which will not kill that His suffering may be prolonged; a living epitome of all the men of sorrows whose hearts were ever seared or blighted by misfortune. And who is this victim? And why has sorrow chosen Him for this relentless sacrifice? My brethren, this is Jesus, the Son of the living God! It is He who made that earth which is humid with His life-blood; who made those stars that glorify the arch of heaven, and the clouds that veil their brightness; whose commanding voice hath ranged those serried ranks of trees and who breathes in those gentle winds that whisper through the trembling leaves. It is Man God, and why is He here, "treading the wine-press alone," why bent beneath this crushing sorrow? "My soul," He cries in unutterable anguish, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." He, the mild, the gentle, the uncomplaining, cannot bear this woe; His soul is sorrowful even unto death; weary, weeping, trembling, He sits on the cold earth, on which He has fallen three times, helplessly prostrate. Where is His Mother, Mary, in this hour of His desolation? Why is not her hand here to lift that drooping brow? why are His friends and disciples absent, when He needs them most? Why is He thus forlorn and companionless? Oh, sin! thou art the cause. "He was wounded for our iniquities. He was wounded for our sins." He took upon Himself the crimes of the whole world to be expiated by the last drop of His sacred blood. The hour of His self-sacrifice has come; and of all the stages of His Passion, perhaps this is the most bitter, the most torturing. Amidst the gloom of the garden He turns on every side, but finds no comfort, no consolation. On one side, He sees, drawn in dread array, all the iniquities that man had ever committed, or ever would commit, to the end of time, crying out for the blood of the victim-God; on the other, He beholds, lowering over His soul, the horrible shadow of sorrow, even to death. Think not that, because He is God, His sufferings are diminished; nay, on that account, they are rather intensified, to an infinite acuteness. As the Omniscient God, He sees those sorrows bearing down upon Him, like the hideous, destroying monsters of a feverish dream; as helpless man, He cannot avert the doom, but succumbs, in the impotence of exhausted nature, to the crushing weight of inexorable pain. And this is thy work, O man! this is the triumph of thy sated passions; those blood-drops forced from the brow of the meekest of men, are the trophies of thy war with God. Worse in thy malice than the Archangel in his pride; he, with blind rashness, dared high heaven; you bruise the bruised reed: he coped with the Almighty power of his Creator; you crush your Saviour in His dying hour. O cruelty of sinful man! you drive your Divine victim into darkness and solitude; you cast Him to the earth, bathed in the crimson streams of His own most sacred blood; you shed over His soul a sorrow, impregnated with all the bitterness of death; you hold up before His vision the chalice of agony, which He must drain to the very dregs, before another sun shall set; you abandon Him ruthlessly to His wretchedness; and, while the angels of heaven weep over His unmitigable sorrows, you sleep on, in the undisturbed repose of a remorseless heart! Three times, in the weaker nature of the Saviour's humanity, shrinking from the frightful ordeal before Him, He cries out to His Heavenly Father, begging that, if possible, the bitter chalice might pass away from Him; but that Father, His only refuge 'mid the horrors of His desolation, seems deaf to His forlorn entreaties. Three times He goes to His apostles, to beg that they might join their prayers to His; but, alas! He finds them wrapt in slumber, and unconscious of the horrors that darkened their Master's soul. An angel from heaven comes down to console Him, but only begs that He may not decline the expiation of our sins; and so Jesus, the Divine victim of mortal sin, lies prostrate on the cold earth, the only Being, amid the wide range of God's creation, without a ray of comfort to cheer Him in His miseries; forgotten by His creatures, and almost unthought of by the Creator, the Great Giver of all consolation. But, see! a light breaks through the darkness that hangs round Gethsemani, and the voices and footsteps of approaching men are heard through the stillness of the starless night. Perhaps some tender hearts are moved to compassion; and perhaps some gentle voices come to pour the balm of consolation into the Saviour's ear. Alas, no! What! and must another drop of bitterness, still more bitter, be added to the cup of Jesus' sorrows? Oh! yes; for the glaring light of the midnight torches reveals to His sacred gaze the features of the traitor Judas —of one who sat that night at His sacred table, and who now comes with a kiss, the emblem of peace, to betray his Master, for lucre, into the hands of armed men!

Follow the afflicted Jesus, now abandoned by all His friends, to the court of Caiphas, where, if any ray of consolation yet gleamed through His sorrows, it was extinguished by the fall of His beloved apostle, Peter. Oh! was not this affliction sufficient of itself to wring with agony the soul of the tender Jesus? to see him who was so loved by his Master, the very Prince of the Apostles, fall into a blasphemous denial that he ever knew Him! See how, after confessing that He was the Son of God, those monsters of iniquity cry out, "Blasphemy! blasphemy!" How, like so many furies let loose from hell, they rush upon their unresisting Victim, and discharge upon Him all kinds of blows, and affronts, and injuries! how they spit upon their Saviour's face, and disgorge their filthy phlegm upon His sacred forehead! how they scoff and ridicule Him! how He stands, with His hands tied behind His back, to offer less resistance to their insults; thus fulfilling the words of the prophet, "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like the lamb before his shearer, He opened not His mouth." In fine, see how He spent the night amongst those demons, the horrors of which no Evangelist has attempted to describe, and whose secrets of iniquity shall not be revealed until He comes, the God of Vengeance, on the judgment day, 'mid the terrible glories of Jehosaphat.

When morning dawns on the horrors of that dreadful night, are Jesus' sorrows to have an end? No; for then He is led forth through the streets of Jerusalem to the court of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, by a brutal mob thirsting for His sacred blood. He who, but a few days before, passed through those same streets in triumph, when the same people strewed His way with palm-branches, now is led along, a miserable captive, to meet the inevitable sentence of a cruel death. Submissive, yet undaunted, He stands before the heathen governor, who is so stricken with His innocence, that even he seeks to set Him free; but the crowd will not be satisfied, and so the humble Jesus is led away to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, clothed with the garment of a fool, a subject for mockery and derision to all His savage spectators. See how Pilate, as if to gratify the bloodthirsty Jews with something less than our Saviour's death, orders Him to be scourged at a pillar, and so the humble Jesus is stripped of His clothes, and bound to that pillar, as if He were a wild beast, and not the mildest of men. See how He is scourged by those brutal soldiers till the blood comes streaming from every pore, and the flesh is torn from His sacred limbs; and yet amid those nameless tortures, He sheds no tear of sorrow for Himself, but only thinks of saving sinful man!

In this miserable state of body and soul, Jesus is led forth into an open court, where He is seated upon a stool for a throne, clothed with a red garment as a mock king; with a crown of thorns upon His head, and a reed for a sceptre in His hands. There He sits with streams of blood gushing down His sacred face, while those barbarian soldiers bend the knee in mockery before Him, and say with tones of feigned submission to His regal power, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Oh! my brethren, let us too bend our knees in spirit, and not only our knees, but our heads, and hearts, and whole being, in adoration of Him who there sits, not only King of the Jews, but King of kings, and Monarch of worlds unnumbered. Let us behold Him as He there sits, with a Divine meekness beaming in His downcast eyes, and no swelling of indignation ruffling His sacred bosom against the monsters who surround Him. Ah!

little they knew (though they should have known), that He who sits before them, in that garb of misery, is no other than the only Son of the Living God: "the figure of His Father's substance, and the splendor of His glory"; that it is He who but spake, and myriads of worlds bounded into light: that it is He who, as the Psalmist sings, "hath put on praise and beauty; who is clothed with light as with a garment; who stretcheth out the heavens as a pavilion; who maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the winds; who hath founded the earth upon its basis; it shall not be moved forever" (Ps. ciii.). Little they know as they strike that sacred face, that He could, with a word, call forth legions of those bright angels that attend with flaming swords on His Divinity, to crush each mocker into dust, and fling down the precipice of hell each soul that dares to scorn the majesty of His Godhead! But the fatal blow is suspended by His mercy, for the work of redemption must be consummated on Calvary, with the last expiring sigh of Jesus.

A few moments more, the insulting alternative of Jesus or Barabbas being accepted in favor of the robber and murderer, a thousand voices rend the air with shouts of exulting madness, "Away with Him, away with Him! crucify Him, crucify Him!" A few moments yet again, and we behold a spectacle from which our common humanity shrinks with ineffable horror and disgust, the Divine Redeemer of men toiling up the Hill of Calvary, beneath a heavy cross, which He must bear to the place of execution, and on which He must hang, till He expire. The last drops of that perspiring brow start forth, and mingle with His streaming blood. The scourge of the executioner reveals new gashes after every faltering step: the infuriated rabble shout and exult over every fresh agony of their victim. Jesus' supernatural strength is at length exhausted by accumulated miseries, He thrice falls beneath His fatal burden, for oh! it were easy to bear that pile of wood, but to bear each sin of Adam and Adam's children—that permeated its very essence, there was the ingredient of its weight, that unnerved the limbs of Jesus, and cast Him prostrate on the blood-stained earth; and yet, when some tender-hearted women wept tears of sympathy for His sorrows, see how He forgets His own sufferings, and thinks only of the sins that have occasioned them. "Weep not," He says, "for me, ye daughters of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

And now the moment is come for this cruel mob to be satiated with the sight of our Saviour's last expiring agonies, and Jesus arrives with His heavy load at the height of Calvary. Behold your Redeemer, drooping to the earth, desolate and abandoned, with scarce one friendly voice soothing Him in this extremity of woe, scarce one friendly sigh compassionating His sorrows! Behold Him nailed on the ground to the rude rough cross with coarse nails pierced through His sacred hands and feet, from which, as from His whole body, the blood flows in copious streams! See how He opens not His mouth to ask for milder treatment; see how no deprecating glance issues for the sympathy of the beholders; see how He is gradually lifted up into the air, and how, at length, the huge cross falls into the cavity prepared for it, with a jolt that shoots new pangs through all His sacred frame; see how through His sacred limbs each bone is distorted from its place, till the words of the Prophet are fulfilled, "They have dug my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones." He is lifted up, and as the furious rabble behold Him raised above their heads, they rend the air with shouts of triumph and brutal exultation that rend the soul of the compassionate Jesus. Oh! let us for a moment go to the foot of Calvary, and behold with different eyes that scene on which the cherubim and seraphim look with wonder and admiration. Christians, behold the victim Jesus, as He there hangs between two thieves, with the scornful motto over His head, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,"—with barbarous soldiers and an infuriated rabble, making the cup of His sorrows more bitter by their blasphemies and reproaches. Behold Him with His sacred head drooping on His chest; His face pale and besmeared with gore, from the thorns that pressed His sacred brow: His heart's pulse beating gradually slower and slower as the moment of death draws near; His mortal thirst only mocked with the sedatives of vinegar and gall; His whole body bruised and lacerated: and His soul, oh! yes, it is His soul that truly feels the sharp arrows of affliction. Martyrs have suffered tortures that defy the conceptions of human fancy; they have been torn limb from limb, they have been roasted slowly to death, they have languished in filthy prisons, 'mid worms and insects, and in the end have been brought forth and devoured by lions and tigers to gratify the curiosity of Roman Amphitheatres! But amid those horrors, sunbeams of gladness shone over their souls, for they saw in visions the bright halls of heaven opened to their gaze, and the arms of the Omnipotent and His angels stretched out to receive them, until they forgot their pains, and felt even on earth the absorbing joy and bliss of heaven. Not so with Jesus; from Him all comfort and consolation had fled. Man had cursed, condemned, and crucified Him; hell had opened its gates and let forth its demons against Him; each sin that man had ever committed, or even would commit to the end of time, rose before His all-seeing vision, and inflicted a separate crucifixion. You and I, alas! rose too before His Divine soul, and were seen to shout, "Away with Him, away with Him! crucify Him, crucify Him!" No angel now descends from the black vault of heaven, with the light of comfort gleaming on his golden wings, for His Heavenly

Father has Himself abandoned Him, till we hear Him crying out in all the horror of utter desolation, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

And why all this, O Jesus? Why art Thou forgotten and forlorn, as if Thou wert an outcast from the human race, and not the Lord of angels and of men? Oh! why, but because Thou canst show Thy love for man no better than by shedding for him the last drop of Thy sacred blood, and suffering for him all the anguish which heaven can afflict, or Thy sacred soul endure? Christians, weep for your Saviour, since no one else will do so. But what have I said? Does no one weep for Jesus? Oh! yes, there are a few at the foot of that sacred cross who weep, but who only increase His sorrows by their affectionate tears. Remarkable above those weeping few, are two whose tears of sympathy flow with more than common profuseness for the dying Jesus. These are His Mother, Mary, and the penitent Magdalen. Oh! see that tender Mother, of whom it had been foretold that "a sword of grief should pierce her soul." "All you who pass by the way, attend and see is there any sorrow like unto her sorrow." See how her eyes are red with weeping, and her heart ready to burst with an agony of woe. Oh! mothers, think what would be your feelings of sorrow, if you saw the child of your bosom, innocent and good, dying naked on a rough cross before the gaze of cold and brutal men, and then you may have some faint idea of this tender mother's grief. Behold Magdalen, who weeps so much, not for the sorrows of her Saviour, as for the part which her own iniquities have had in His present affliction and distress. On her cheeks the tears of sympathizing woman commingle with those of the repentant sinner. Go, Christians, join your tears with those of this holy pair; weep with Mary for the sorrows of your Saviour, and with Magdalen for your sins, which have nailed Him to the cross.

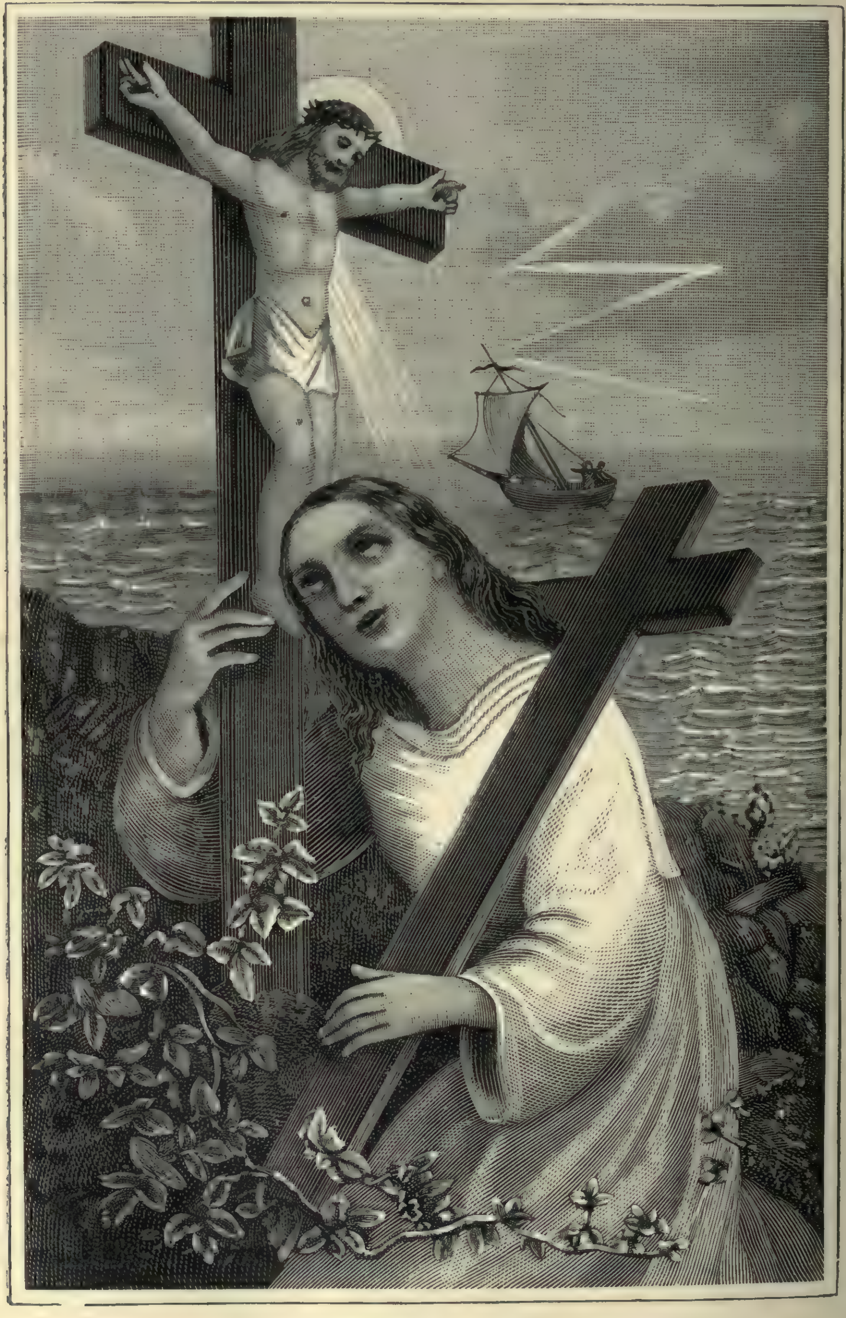
For the space of three hours that Jesus hung upon the cross, the sun refused to give his light; dark clouds floated sadly through the sky; thunders rolled, and lurid lightnings lent a more funeral tinge to the pall-like aspect of the heavens. His tender heart had forgotten the cruelty and impiety of His executioners, and He had prayed, in broken accents, for their pardon and forgiveness, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Seeing the fatal moment was at hand, He had exclaimed with a loud voice, "It is consummated," and then had cried out, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." A huge eclipse darkens the face of the earth. Nature, in her sable and terrific dress, pauses for the dread event with all the appearance of awe and terror. A horrid stillness prevails. Suddenly the earth trembles, the veil of the temple is rent, the graves open, and the reanimated corpses of the dead wander once more upon the earth, in all the grim ghastliness of the tomb. The Saints of the Old Law, so long imprisoned, await the coming of Him who was to rend their prison-bars asunder; the Eternal Father surrounded by His myriad angels, looks down expectant from His imperishable throne, when 'midst the tremulous silence of eternal space, lifting up His Sacred Head, the Divine Jesus dies! He is dead: dead. Who is dead? Jesus the only Son of the Living God; God Himself. Oh! sinners, behold the work of your hands, behold the sacrifice you have sought; suspended betwixt earth and heaven, torn, livid, bloodless, lifeless, hangs the body of Jesus, the victim of your iniquities, the victim of His own tender love. Sin! thou hast done thy bloody work; thou hast pierced with thorns that brow where meekness loved to sit enthroned; thou hast besmeared with gore that beauteous face; thou hast rent with whips and cords that tender flesh; thou hast opened those sacred veins, from which the last drops of life-blood have just ebbed. Sin, art thou satiated? Thou hast put God to death; what greater sacrifice couldst thou exact? But thy triumph has recoiled upon thyself; His death has crushed thy destructive power. "Death," He cries, "I will be thy death." Sin can kill eternally no longer; it is Jesus who is now victorious. Oh! death, where is now thy victory? Oh! death, where is now thy sting?

However we may moralize on the sufferings and death of our Divine Redeemer, however we may admire the unspeakable love displayed by Him for us in every stage of His bitter Passion, there is one conclusion to which we should come; there is one practical resolution we should make. That conclusion is, that sin is the greatest of all evils, the greatest insult we could offer to God, inasmuch as every repetition of it has, of its own nature, a tendency to force the Son of God once more through the terrible ordeal of suffering which we have just contemplated. That resolution should be, never again to offend our God. Is there any one in this vast assemblage who has listened attentively to the recital of Jesus' sufferings, and would wantonly commit an act by which He would be driven once more through the agonies of Gethsemani, and the death-woes of Calvary? Forbid it, nature! Forbid it, heaven! I shall not weaken your abhorrence of sin by any other argument than the one I have used, namely, the bare spectacle of the miseries endured by the Son of God on its account. Him who views that picture, and sins again, beholding it, no other argument could move. Woe is him indeed; yes, woe to those who meditate on Jesus' sufferings and derive no moral of amendment from the sacred theme! Woe to those to whom Good Friday comes, but comes in vain, and Easter Sunday brings no spiritual joy! If we have hitherto offended our Gracious God, let us remember that His mercies are above all His works. The history of God's Saints is the history of God's mercies. Behold His Apostles! poor fishermen of Galilee; once weak and trembling, they march through the world with the courage of giants, armed only with the cross of their Master, and shed their blood with smiles of joy for that Master's sake! Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor of the Christians, is converted into Paul the Apostle of Christ; "the Lamb," says St. Augustine, "who was slain by wolves, converts the wolf into a lamb." "If need be that I glory," cries out St. Paul, "I will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world."

Augustine himself, that miracle of sanctity, and prodigy of genius, squanders the flower of his youth in luxury, wantonness, and infidelity; but his admiration for the heroes of antiquity is suddenly lost in his love for the Victim of Calvary; his tears for the sorrows of a fabled queen are turned to wailings for the agonies of his Saviour; and his enthusiasm for the high-sounding periods of Cicero is exalted into ecstasies for the eloquence of Jesus.

Ignatius, the wayward soldier of a worldly king, is converted into an immortal champion of the King of Glory; while Xavier, the pampered child of fortune, lays his wealth, his nobility, his youth and beauty at the feet of his crucified Saviour; and, leaving his beloved Spain, wanders away to lands where rage an Indian sun and Indian ferocity, to announce the Gospel of the Lord, and preach the glories of the cross. Kings and princes have wearied of the glories of the world, and, at their Master's call, stripping off their royal robes, have followed in sackcloth and ashes the footsteps of the "Man of Sorrows"; and, exchanging the sceptre for the cross, have won an unfading crown in the kingdom of their Saviour. Millions of men, at various stages of the Church's history, have meditated on the Passion of the Lord; and, while they might have lived and died the slaves and victims of sin, have freely shed their very life-blood to testify their devotion to Jesus of Calvary; and so, instead of sharing the everlasting torments of the damned, they now reign in glory and jubilation, with the never-fading wreath of martyrdom encircling their brows, loving and beloved by the Almighty.

So, my brethren, shall it be with you, if you meditate as you ought on this great subject; your souls are precious in the sight of God as those of His Saints or His Apostles. He shed His blood for you as well as He did for them. He makes no exception when He says, "He who would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." His cross is a cure for every sin: "If your sins were as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as wool." It is a soother for every sorrow: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." It is riches to the poor: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is food and drink to the hungry and thirsty: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall have their fill." Well, indeed, might St. Paul exclaim, "I will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," for the glories of this world shall pass away, but the glories of the cross shall be celebrated for myriads of eternities. If Jesus asks us this day to meditate on His sufferings, it surely is, that we may be brought to a sense of our danger, and fly to Him for pardon and forgiveness. See how He receives the last sighs of the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Does He not love each of us as much as He loved the penitent thief? Is He not the Father of the prodigal child? Is He not the Shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep, and sought the one that went astray? Oh! go to the foot of His cross with the penitent Magdalen, and shed tears of sorrow for His sufferings and your own sins; and when the glorious morning of His resurrection comes, go forth with her to meet Him, no more with tears, or if it be, with tears of joy. For you the forty days of Lent shall close with mourning; but when they will have passed away, a day of joy and holy exultation will break forth, when weeping and sorrow shall be no more, but peace, and a serenity of soul, which sin can never give, and which sin alone can take away. If this night you ask your dying Jesus for this grace, think you He will refuse you? Ah, no! He has suffered too much for you to refuse you this small favor: and while your eyes are fixed on Him, forget not her who stands at the foot of the cross, and feels in her soul each pang that pierces His Sacred Heart; forget not the Immaculate Mother of Jesus. Remember that He has consigned you to her maternal care, in the words addressed to His beloved disciple: "Son, behold thy mother!" Ask of her that she may obtain for you pardon of your sins, and the grace never to offend Him more. And when the day of His second, His glorious appearance, comes in the valley of Jehosaphat, let us hope that He will welcome each one of us to the kingdom of His glory, in the sweet consoling words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then shall we rejoice for an endless eternity, that on this night we were converted to Him who was "wounded for our iniquities," who was "bruised for our sins." Oh, Jesus! God of mercy, God of love! Oh, Divine Lamb! who has sacrificed Thyself for our salvation! O Victim, consumed by the fire of Thine own sorrows! grant us the grace to love Thee as Thou dost deserve to be loved. Oh! would that we could die for Thee, as Thou hast died for us. Hitherto, alas! we have lived for ourselves, for our passions, for our sins: grant us, for the remainder of our lives, to live only for Thee, Jesus, our God, our love, our all! Amen.



Divine Refuge.

SERMON ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

"The multiplication of the loaves and fishes."—JOHN vi.

THE miracle here recorded, performed, as it was, so strikingly and so manifestly in opposition to the law of nature, cannot fail to excite in our minds the most profound astonishment. An immense multitude of people, numbering about five thousand, attracted by that inexpressible charm which ever attached to our Divine Redeemer, followed Him across the sea of Galilee, forgetful of their homes, their occupations, and their physical wants, and thinking themselves amply repaid for their privations if they could only catch those delightful words that fell softly and vivifyingly as the dews of heaven from His sacred lips. The tender heart of Jesus was touched by their self-sacrificing devotion, and, grateful as He is for the slightest exhibition of love from His creatures, He could not leave unrewarded a self-denial so perfect, and an attachment so sincere. He ordered the multitude to sit down upon the grass, and taking five barley loaves and two fishes, the only eatable things within reach, He so multiplied them that not only were the multitude satiated, but twelve baskets were filled with the fragments of the feast. This was truly a most stupendous miracle, calculated to exhaust all the resources of our praise and admiration. In striving to comprehend it, we become convinced of the littleness of reason; in believing it as God's unerring Word, we are impressed with the magnitude of faith, and are forced to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone doth wonderful things."

And yet, if we are filled with admiration in contemplating the magnificence of this miracle, and if we give glory to God for the power and love evinced in its performance, how comes it that we regard with indifference far more astounding wonders wrought every day under our own eyes by His omnipotent hand? Is not the creation, and, perhaps still more, the conservation and government of the universe, a far more stupendous miracle than that recorded in the Gospel of this day? Who was it that filled and fed the multitudes beyond the sea of Galilee with a few loaves miraculously multiplied, but He who every day feeds and fills the millions of the world with the fruits of the earth, in comparison to whose enormous produce the few seeds from which they spring are infinitesimally small? Who was it that multiplied the two small fishes, but He who fills the immense depths of the ocean with those numberless living creatures, which, after having supplied the wants of the human race, leave a vast remainder that seem to exist for no other end than to excite the wonder and extort the praise of man? And yet we behold these wonders of Providence un moved; we regard them as ordinary events, as if they were matters in which we had no concern—matters which seem to have no claims upon our admiration, much less upon our gratitude to God. How different was the conduct of the multitude, as described in the Gospel. When they saw their wants so miraculously supplied, they cried out in amazement, "This is of a truth the prophet that is come unto the world," and they were about to take Him by force and make Him their king. What a lesson may not we Christians, we followers of that wonder-working Christ, learn from the example of those poor unevangelized, untutored men! It is time that we open our eyes to the wonders of God's Providence with which we are surrounded, and of which this miracle is so striking a symbol; it is time that we offer the long-denied homage of our hearts to that eternal benevolence which has created us for bliss, and which sustains us by its invisible power until we attain that end. It is strange, my brethren, that from constant familiarity we are unmoved by certain spectacles which, seen for the first time, would excite, in the most intense degree, the passions of our souls. Thus, if a man born blind were suddenly restored to sight, in what language could he convey to you the feelings of his soul in contemplating the marvels of creation? What would be his delight, his astonishment, his instinctive outburst of praise to the Great Creator on beholding the beams of the summer sun, the boundless expanse of the ocean, smiling fields, the lofty mountains, the descending shades of night succeeded by the light of the placid moon and stars! But we have seen them from our childhood upwards, and only by forced reflection can we think of the Almighty hand, and the unbounded love from which they spring. Divine Providence strews the pathway of life with wonders, and we see them not, or we ignore them. Thus, man is deprived of much merit, and God of much praise and glory which are His due. Let us then, for a few brief moments, sit in fancy on the summit of some majestic mountain, alone with God, and contemplate His ways to man, that we may learn two useful lessons, to confide in His Divine Providence with courage and hope, and to submit to it with docility and resignation.

And where shall we turn, and not see the most striking evidence of this supreme and beneficent power—conducting, sustaining, moving, and governing all things. We see God in the light and warmth of the celestial luminaries; in the succession of seasons; in the alternation of night and day; in the abundance of the earth for the uses of man; in the regular motion of the innumerable spheres around us; in the harmony, and beauty, and wisdom, that reign throughout all creation. "How great are Thy works, O Lord!" said the Psalmist: "Thou hast done all things in wisdom; the earth is filled with Thy riches." And not only in the general management of the universe do we discern His Almighty Providence, but in the special care which God takes of all the creatures of His hands, and chiefly of His greatest creature—man. Go where you will, and God is your guide, your protector, and your safeguard. "He hath given His angels charge over thee, lest perchance thou knock thy foot against a stone"; and again, "If I go up to heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present; if I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thy hand shall lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." The very disorders which we perceive in the moral world prove the existence of a ruling Providence; for how can we call it disorder unless it be a departure from a principle of order, which exists somewhere? It exists, namely, in the Providence of God, which, for its own wise ends, permits evil here to be mixed with good, that the evil may be punished hereafter, and the good rewarded, and thus the balance of order be adjusted for eternity.

It is not wonderful, indeed, that the Pagans of old, who had only an imperfect notion of the Deity, should have busied themselves so much in supplying the wants of life and in meeting the exigencies of nature, that they should have limited their hopes and aspirations to the goal of the grave. Sitting "in darkness, and in the shadow of death," it is not wonderful that they were ignorant of a Divine Providence controlling human affairs; that they should have regarded themselves as the makers of their own good or evil fortunes, and deemed their deities no less than blind instruments of destiny, incompetent to govern the world. But for us, my brethren, who are enlightened, and who recognize a beneficent Providence, devoted to our protection, and ever mindful of our wants, would it not be to run counter to the lights we enjoy, and to belie the faith we profess, if we gave ourselves too much concern for the things of this passing world? And this is what Christ has taught us in His Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you"; and "Be ye not solicitous what you may eat, or what you may drink, or wherewith you may be clothed, for after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." What more do you want, my brethren, to quiet your fears and apprehensions, than to know for certain that your affairs are in the hands of God—in the hands of a Being whose all-merciful eye is ever directed to your wants and necessities; whose wisdom knows how to provide for you; whose bounty is inexhaustible in your regard; whose Providence is equal to preserve in existence what His power was able to call forth from nothing; whose far-reaching care robes the lily of the field in a glory surpassing that of Solomon? Or how can you imagine for a moment that that Great God, whose attributes are, as they are, boundless, could abandon to distress or destruction man, the noblest work of His Almighty hands? that He could act thus, of whom the Psalmist sings, "Thou openest Thy hands, and Thou fillest with blessing every living creature." He who made the seasons to succeed each other, that the earth might give forth its fruits in good time! And if this God, of such magnificence and bounty, has sometimes seemed to forget you, be assured it was not so, until you had first forgotten Him. Be faithful to Him, and the sun shall fall from the heavens ere He abandon you. "They that seek the Lord," cries out the same Psalmist, "shall not be deprived of any good." Do you seek proofs of this Providence of God? Then open the Sacred Page, and read. Behold it in the preservation of the Israelites in the land of Egypt, and the infliction of plagues upon their enemies, until they were delivered from bondage. Behold it in their safe passage through the Red Sea, while Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen were sunk in the wave. Behold it in the manna of the wilderness, and in the miraculous fountains of Horeb; in the bread provided for the starving Elias, and for Daniel in the lion's den. Behold it in the miracle by which a few loaves and fishes were made to feed five thousand souls. But why seek for individual examples? Is not the whole Sacred Word a continuous record of God's unspeakable Providence in behalf of man?

You, my brethren, nevertheless, sometimes complain and murmur against this adorable Providence of God, when the world ceases to go well with you. And why does not the world go well with you? Why do you not succeed in your projects, in the acquisition of this good fortune, in the gratification of this ambition? It is because you defy Providence, or act as if no Providence were there; you seek by every means to protect yourself against accident, as if your safety depended on yourselves alone! and you fear not that that Providence, which you outrage by your contempt of it, may laugh at your designs, and confound the false wisdom of your plans. Tormented with anxiety to increase your store, or with fear lest you may lose it, you spend your days in trouble and alarm, in hopes and disappointments: you amass, and God scatters; you plant, and God uproots; you pretend that you are only endeavoring to supply the wants of nature, but Providence tears off the mask, and reveals the avarice and cupidity of your heart. If you trusted in Providence, indeed, you would have no anxiety for the morrow; but the very fear you endure shows that your trust is not in the Lord, but in yourself.

Many are the pretexts you make to justify this defiance of Providence, and this cupidity of your heart; you admit that, in all pursuits, your eternal salvation should hold the first place! but you add that, at the same time, it is necessary to have wherewithal to live, to support a household, a family, an establishment. Both these statements are quite correct, and all would be well if you acted in this spirit. But you seek to gain the goods of life by crooked ways, by over-industry. Two short reflections will show that cupidity, and not true Christian seeking, is at the bottom of your desires. Do you not seek the goods of life more eagerly than the goods of eternity? Are you content with what is barely necessary, or do you not seek much more? What is this but cupidity? Is it not to subvert the order which God has established, to love the creature more than the Creator? to prefer earth to heaven, to choose time before eternity, that which passes, to that which does not pass away? And the ardor with which you seek the goods of earth most clearly proves how much you prefer them to the goods of heaven. You have, for example, been warned again to subdue that imperious pride, that ungovernable anger to which you are a victim; to repress that passion for intoxicating drinks; to wean your tongue from those blasphemies and obscenities; to be reconciled to the enemy whom you have offended: but you are occupied with the cares of the world, and the remonstrances of conscience plead with you in vain. I will think of my salvation, you say, when I have succeeded in this or that arrangement—when I have settled my affairs. But, my brethren, if this devotion of yours to temporal affairs be just and reasonable, the danger to you is that it would go so far as to make you forgetful of your God, and insensible to the interests of your immortal soul! It is permitted to you to provide for your temporal affairs, but surely it is not permitted you to neglect the affairs of eternity; it is permitted to work for the world, but you must not forget that there is a world beyond the grave, for which you must labor more. How different is it with the true Christian! Convinced of his noble origin and his glorious destiny, persuaded that here he has no lasting city, all his desires turn heavenwards; and if sometimes he is forced to turn his eyes to earth, and struggle for the necessaries of life, his soul is tranquil with every variety of fortune; he acts without concern or emotion, because all his desires are regulated by reason and by faith; he seeks only what he wants; he is content with his daily bread. God tells him to ask no more; and if once he raises his head above poverty, there is nothing he fears so much as abundance, for woe, says the Scripture, is the portion of the rich.

My brethren, let us always remember, that whatever God wishes to happen shall happen; that no man can oppose His Divine Will. "All things," say the Saints, "are in Thy power, and there is none that can resist Thy will." It is, then, of necessity that we submit with docility and resignation to the decrees of Providence, for these decrees shall be executed, whether we will or no. If we yield to them, we shall fulfil our duty; if we oppose them, they shall oblige us, in spite of us, to carry them out. He who strives to resist God is like the ocean in a tempest; its waves rise frantically from the depths, and seem to grasp at heaven; but mount they ever so high, they fall back worsted in the vain attempt; for they must obey the voice of Him who said to the deep, "thus far shalt thou go, and no farther; and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves."

And if inanimated nature obeys so faithfully the order of the Creator, if the earth remains fixed on its basis, and the sun and stars move unwaveringly in the orbit prescribed for them by Eternal Wisdom, how comes it that man alone, the noblest work of all, should rebel against his God? Is it for this he received the glorious gift of reason, that he should signalize himself amongst all creatures by his disobedience? that reason which was bestowed upon him that he might do homage to his Maker, that he might render Him fit worship and due submission; that he might adore that Supreme Power which created, and that Supreme Intelligence which governs the universe! Strange error of man! Know you not that God alone can have an arbitrary will, for He alone is independent, and superior to all other beings that exist! God would cease to be supreme, if man could do as he pleases. Let, then, the Almighty Power execute His will according to His pleasure; and let us, weak and finite creatures, be content to obey.

If you act in this spirit, God will be with you, and you will prosper. Behold how He stood by the patriarchs of old, who trusted in Him! He sustained Jacob in his exile, and Joseph in his bonds, and Moses amid the contradictions of a rebellious and idolatrous people. Submission to the will of God presents to us in Job a model of patience the most heroic, in the midst of sufferings impossible to conceive. Animated by this spirit, the Apostles and first Christians remained firmly attached to God, in long fasts and vigils, in chains and dungeons, in good and evil fortune: in all that happened they beheld the finger of God; in prosperity and adversity, they equally blest the Lord. Happy indeed is he who resigns himself wholly to the will of God, who throws off all reliance on himself, and places his body and soul in the safe keeping of the All-loving and the All-wise! Peace of mind is the first-fruit of this submission, as it is the foretaste of that eternal peace which is to be its reward.

Without this submission there is no peace. "Who has resisted Him," says Job, "and had peace?" Tranquillity of mind follows the man of resignation, through crosses and adversities, the same as lighted his pathway in the hour of success: and never, you may be sure, was the soul of Job more joyous than when, in the moment of his utter misery and destitution, he cried out, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Thanks beyond measure, exclaims the true Christian, to that good God, to that wise Providence, who has humiliated me, and steeped me in affliction: because, in this state, I have the means of saving my immortal soul; of procuring true peace and tranquillity of spirit; of becoming humble, penitent, and resigned; of detaching myself from creatures, and uniting myself irrevocably to that God who never abandons those that trust in Him. Oh, my God, continues the true Christian, I make this declaration to-day, before the altar, that I, and all I am and have, belong to Thee. It is not want, or sickness, or humiliation I dread; I only fear that I may disobey Thee. Do with me as Thou wilt. Nature may murmur and repine; but, not my will, but Thine, be done. Take then, my brethren, good and evil alike from the hands of God, for He knows what is best for you. If good come, accept it with gratitude; if evil, bear it with patience and resignation. Only ask, at all times, that the holy will of God may be fulfilled in you, that it may be done on earth as it is in heaven; for if on earth, like Christ, you carry your cross, like Christ in heaven you shall wear the crown.

SERMON ON FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."—
ST. LUKE ii. 51.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—The leading events of our Blessed Saviour's life are commemorated on the several festivals and Sundays throughout the year; and reference is made to them in portions of the Gospel recited at the Sacrifice of the Mass. Between the finding our Divine Lord with the Doctors in the Temple, and the commencement of His public career, an interval of eighteen years elapses, and the history of that long period is summed up in the few words which tell us that Jesus went down to Nazareth with His parents, and "was subject to them." During that large passage of the Saviour's life, He, the Divine Model of every virtue to mankind, affords to children the most perfect pattern of filial piety and obedience. Shining through the *vista* of centuries, the light of His example comes to illumine us to-day on this solemn obligation; and as, by the communion of saints, the links of relationship are not sundered, even in death, the lesson is addressed to us all; for our parents, though dead, are our parents still, and may be assisted by our prayers and good works, when no other manifestation of honor can be made.

Jesus, then, is the model of children, Son of the Eternal Father — equal to Him in all things, omnipotent, and independent; but, by becoming man, by bringing Himself down to the level of humanity, He at once subjected Himself not only to His Father, but to His own creatures, Mary and Joseph. Here is a most profound mystery of abjection, a most sublime lesson to the human race, a most glorious model of domestic life. Children, who dare to despise the precepts of God, who dispute the rights of parental authority, who proclaim the liberty to govern yourselves, go, if indeed you be followers of Christ, if your hopes for eternity be founded on the Christian faith, go to Nazareth, and there contemplate the King of kings; behold Him who created the heavens and the earth, renouncing His own will, and voluntarily subjecting Himself to the will of two mortal beings, called into existence by His breath, the work of His own Almighty hands.

The obligation of children to their parents is threefold: namely, an obligation of honor, of reverence, of service; and I will ask your attention while I show you how far this triple duty is founded on the dictates of reason and religion.

First, with regard to honor. This includes respect and love. Why then should we respect our parents more than other persons? For this reason: that, just as God, because He is the first principle of our creation, is entitled to our respect more than any human being whatsoever; so our parents being, after God, the authors of our existence, we should respect them most, after God. Indeed the respect due to God and to parents has been always designated by the same expression, namely, filial piety, this being the love of a child for its father, whether temporal or eternal. The father is entitled to this respect on account of the exalted position he holds toward his children. He is to them the representative of God. He is bound to teach and administer to them God's law. He is, as it were, a king in that small state called the family; there he exercises a sway with which nature has invested him, and which is confirmed to him by the ordinances of religion. This authority in the parent has been sanctioned by the unanimous voice of all the peoples that ever existed in the world. Even among savage tribes the rights of paternity have ever been regarded as sacred, and have never been infringed with impunity. Those intimate relations, commonly called the ties of blood, operate more powerfully than any other influence on the human mind. The same Providence which has elevated the parent to a position of authority has implanted in the breast of the child an instinct of submission which cannot be acted against without a strong revulsion of the natural moral sense. This cry of blood ever rings in the ears of humanity; all men hear it, all men obey it; he who uproots it from his nature goes forth the shunned of men, with the callousness of Cain in his heart, and the brand of Cain upon his brow.

A Pagan sage of antiquity beautifully paints this picture of filial obligation as he saw it in the dim mirror of nature only. "There is," he says, "on earth no image of the Divinity more worthy of respect than our father and our mother; they are visible deities; we were born in their houses, as it were, in their temples, so that we should offer to them sacrifices of honor, of love, of allegiance; we should feel in their presence as we would feel before an altar." This sentiment of a Pagan philosopher has been approved by the Sacred Word of God, which apportions the same degree of denunciation and punishment to filial impiety and to blasphemy. "Accursed is he," saith the Lord, "who honoreth not his father and his mother." "He who shall strike his father or his mother, let him die the death."

In the early ages of the world, before cities were built, or society formed, the father was the sovereign in his family; he rewarded and punished, and from his court there was no appeal. The manners of human life have changed since then, but the natural authority of the parent has not been annulled. Circumstances only obstruct or limit its operation.

We should, then, respect our parents; we are bound also to love them. Respect without love is but a cold formality; love without respect is no more than passion; but love and respect combined are the most exalted tribute which the human soul can pay to a superior being. Such is the tribute we owe our parents, more than to all other beings, after God. Why? Because they are, as I have said, the authors of our existence; and because there was no labor which they would not undergo, no danger which they would not risk, no sacrifice which they would not make, to promote our true happiness and welfare. Thus the love of a parent, and particularly of a mother for a child, has passed into a proverb. It is the deepest, the tenderest, the most delicate, the most ineradicable feeling of the human breast. It is a love that absorbs all other affections—a love stronger than the love of life itself. Woe to him who treats that love with contumely, who resists its pleadings, and contemns its warnings! Woe to him who wrings with anguish a mother's heart, and unlocks the sacred fountain of a mother's tears! It were better for him that he had never been born. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brook pick it out, and the young of the eagle eat it." To you who love your parents, what name of earthly names is dearer or more sacred than the name of a mother? She was the first and truest friend you ever had. She watched over you with unceasing care through all the dangers that beset you, from the impotency of the cradle to the independence of your manhood. When others fled in consternation from your sick-bed, from the spectacle of disease, and the horror of contagion, she never abandoned you, but stood through weary days and sleepless vigils, wrestling with death as with a wild beast that had come to ravish from her the life which was dearer to her than her own. When slanderous tongues sought to defame you, she was still the champion of your reputation, and the uncompromising guardian of your innocence. Whatever of good was in you, her love magnified a thousand-fold, while your weakness and errors melted away like mists before her gentle vision. She wept with you in your sorrows; she was confounded in your shame; she exulted in your joys, and she gloried in your triumphs. In the sympathies or congratulations of other friends, you always feared the hollow heart; but no shadow of doubt or suspicion ever fell across the bright outpourings of your mother's love. Hardened though you may have been by contact with the coarse world, yet you always listened with reverence and awe to the words of your mother's counsel or reproach. Nought else human had power to subdue your sternness, or to melt your soul to tears. Her advice was like the appealing voice of God, and you heard it with fear, and you obeyed it for love. Her ambition was, that you should be good, that thus you might be happy. In this hope she lived and rejoiced; for this consummation she prayed with all the fervor of her soul. It was her earnest longing, as she trembled in hope and fear on the threshold of eternity; it will form the burden of her intercession to God, until you meet her in the happy land. Blessed is he who loves his mother thus; but woe to him whom a mother's tears and entreaties fail to move! There is for him no surer sign of reprobation; for what agent of conversion can forebode success, when this, the gentlest, and yet the most potent of all, has essayed the task in vain?

Beside the tribute of honor which we owe our parents, we are also bound to show them reverence: that is to say, we are bound to acknowledge our dependence on them, and to obey them. The authority over us with which God has invested them entitles them to our allegiance. The human mind naturally sighs for freedom; and there are those who would shake off even the salutary restraint of parental sway. But no sophistry or sentiment can prove the justice of this assumption; for be you as free as even your own imaginings depict, you must bow down before some superior power. As long as you are in the world, moving amongst your kind, there must be restraints to prevent your liberty from degenerating into license, lest, by your excesses, you mar the well-being of yourself or your fellow-men; you are not free from dependence on God; society claims the right to control you; the State regards you merely as a part of a great machine, set moving in a fixed direction for the well-being of the whole. By these laws your liberty is checked, and you admit the justice of the arrangement. Why, then, should you feel humiliated by being placed in subjection to your parents, whose power over you is natural; whose love protects you like a shield; and whose very punishments are inflicted not for the general good, but for your own temporal and eternal welfare?

You recognize, then, the right of being dependent; and the practical recognition of this dependence is obedience. The parent who gave you life may justly prescribe the mode in which that life ought to be conducted, and that is, according to the law of God, which the parent is bound to administer. If, then, you wish to obey God, you will obey your parents, through whose mouth He speaks to you. Amongst those whom St. Paul classifies as certain to incur damnation, namely, the covetous, the haughty, the proud, blasphemers, and the like, he includes those who are disobedient to their parents. Your parents are answerable to

God for your salvation; this motive alone should induce you to obey them. But for a child to obey his parents is not only a duty, it is an advantage, nay a necessity. Can a child live of itself? Left to nature alone, how long could it subsist? Has it wisdom sufficient to avoid the shoals and quicksands that beset its voyage on the ocean of life? Where is its sagacity to encounter dangers and difficulties? How poor a guide is reason for youth, when its action is thwarted by a vivid imagination, a rapidity of impulse, a warmth of passion! Without the sage counsel of a loving parent, how soon is the rash son or daughter lost in the fatal meshes of sin and ruin! The misfortune is, that children never see their error until poverty, or the grim spectacle of death, stares them in the face, and the remedy comes too late. Witness the miserable end of Absalom. Witness the tardy repentance of the prodigal son. How many thousands of children are lost forever, because they would not bow to the yoke of parental authority! One becomes a gambler, and dissipates his fortune; another delivers himself up to debauchery, and cuts short his life in the very flower of his age; another rushes from crime to crime, and is only checked by the prison-cell, or perhaps the scaffold. Good God! what a fate. But may it not, in truth, be said that the vast majority of the vices that prevail in the world, all the excesses and disorders, tears and heart-burnings, horrible diseases and premature deaths, which startle our ears and shock our feelings every day of our lives, spring originally from this gigantic source of evil, the disobedience and insubordination of children to their parents? The disobedient child is accursed by God, and his career is never long in this world. The blight of heaven's malediction is on him, and he perishes and rots beneath its deadly blast. "Accursed is he who honoreth not his father and mother," saith the Lord.

The last obligation we owe our parents is that of service; we are bound to assist them in their necessities; to provide for them in their illness: to comfort them in their old age, and to console them in all their afflictions. If children complied with this portion of the Divine precept, how much anguish and misery, poverty and ruin might be spared to the world! But sons and daughters, led away by the devil and their own passions, turn their backs upon their parents, on those who gave them the life which they enjoy, and who sustained them in its perils, through many long and weary years. The pang that pierces most bitterly the human heart is the sensation that it has been treated with ingratitude, and that ingratitude is always the more cruel in proportion to the love which it will not repay. No tongue can describe the gall and wormwood of anguish that rankle in the heart of a mother who has been despised or neglected by the child of her bosom. And hence, the All-just God vents His fiercest wrath on those who treat their parents with ingratitude.

"He that afflicteth his father, and that chaseth away his mother, is infamous and unhappy," saith the wise man. "He that stealeth anything from his father, or from his mother, and saith this is no sin, is the partner of a murderer," saith the same inspired writer. Is it not natural justice that so great a crime should bring down the vengeance of the Great God on the offender? One who acts in this manner has lost the title, the character, and the privileges of a child. "Take a ray out of the sun," says St. Chrysostom, "and it shines not; a stream from the fountain, and it dries up; a branch from the tree, and it withers; a limb from the body, and it rots; so, remove a child from devotion to his parent, and he is no longer a child." We do service to our parents when we solace them in their troubles, and, in the pure joy which a faithful child feels in this good work, he may recognize some small share of that reward which God pays to virtue even here. When length of years silvers over the head of your parent, and chills the life-blood in his veins, be then, above all, his comfort and support. "Son," saith the voice of God, "support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength, for the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten. And in justice *thou* shalt be built up, and in the day of affliction thou shalt be remembered, and thy sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather." On your parents' death-bed, you should redouble all your previous care; and when they have passed away from this world of toil, you should remember that they may still stand in need of your service; you should pray with your whole heart to God for their eternal repose.

From all I have said, my brethren, it is easy to see that he who loves his parents thus shall merit the benedictions of heaven, the least among which is a long and happy life even in this world. "Honor thy father and thy mother," saith the Lord, "that thy days may be long in the land." The Scriptures are profuse in their praises of good children, and in describing the rewards which they shall receive. "He that honoreth his mother," saith the wise man, "is as one that layeth up a treasure." And cannot our own experience point to many men in this life whose success and high-standing, even in the world's esteem, may be traced to the love which they bore their parents, and above all to their mother? "He that honoreth his father," say the Scriptures again, "shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard"; and again, "Honor thy father in word and work and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain to the latter end."

Let, then, the sacred model of Christ and His Mother Mary in Nazareth be ever before the eyes of children and of parents; Mary portraying the love, the grace, the majesty of motherhood, and Jesus showing forth the honor, reverence, and service which form the threefold duty of a child. In a household hallowed by such mutual charity, peace and its thousand blessings shall abound: for Mary will love that mother who imitates her virtues, and Jesus will guard the son who takes Him for an example. The world and its cares, and the wickedness of men, shall invade the peace and happiness of your home too, and for few shall the eighteen years of their Nazareths flow in serene, uninterrupted course: but love, superior to every trial, will never sunder the true parent and child. The filial piety that burned like a sweet aroma in the tranquil cottage of Joseph was the same that distilled in drops of balm from the lips of the Man of Sorrows on the cross, when He bent His last flickering glance on the Mother of Sorrows beneath, and faltered forth the dying words, "Mother, behold thy Son." So be it with you. Let your love for your parents be the same in sorrow as in joy, in your Calvaries as in your Nazareths; because, for you too the hour of affliction shall pass; and whither Jesus and Mary have gone, you shall follow, to receive from the hands of your Eternal Father length of days, not in this transient world, but in that land which He has prepared for the everlasting joy and glory of His children.

SERMON ON DEATH.

"It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment."—Heb. ix. 27.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—As you may surmise, from my use of these words, I am about to address you on a subject with which you are all perfectly familiar; which presents itself every day before your eyes, in every shape and form, and with all the circumstances of which you are better acquainted than with any other subject whatsoever; for it is of all subjects that relate to man, by far the most important, inasmuch as in it are wrapped up all his interests, both temporal and eternal; it is the pivot on which all man's happiness turns, the point of the balance, in one scale of which is man's eternal bliss, and in the other man's eternal woe—that subject is Death! Perhaps in the whole history of the human mind, nothing is more singular than the apathy with which man regards this tremendous subject. To win wealth, honor, or power, for a few fleeting years, man will undertake any trouble, any labor, any privation; to escape sickness, poverty, pain, or hunger, he will employ all the energies of mind and body; but to win an eternity of happiness, or to escape the eternity of misery, which depends upon death, few men exercise a thought, very few strain a muscle. Of all subjects, death is the most awful; the one most calculated to excite horror in the mind; the ordeal from which our nature shrinks with ineffable terror; and yet, in general, how little one thinks on it as one ought; we fly from the thought of it, as if it were no concern of ours; we shut our eyes, that the horrid phantom may not frighten us; we arouse ourselves into a false courage, and say that, perhaps, it is not so terrible after all. We postpone the consideration of it for a more suitable time, as if time were our own! Sometimes we catch a view of the monster in all his grimness, in the dead of night, when gloomy thoughts do most predominate; perhaps when we have waked out of some horrid dream, in which the mind, freed from control, caught some glimpses of the terrible reality, and then we tremble; our conscience is shocked: we see the hideousness of sin: but with that fatal apathy with which the subject is regarded, we strive to banish the salutary thoughts of amendment, with which God would inspire us, and long for the first rays of daylight, which may disperse the gloom, and restore us to the false ease of thoughtless indifference. What wonder is it, when Death comes at last, it comes when he is least looked for; and that the soul which would not see its danger is victimized and lost forever? Let us, my brethren, to-day manifest a little more interest in our eternal welfare than Christians are generally wont to do; let us open our eyes; let us contemplate our danger in all its details; let us see the precise position in which we stand with regard to this tremendous subject; that, if our lives be such as to inspire us with confidence, we may so persevere to the end; and that if, on the other hand, we have been heretofore indifferent and apathetic, we may be encouraged so to live that we may not be afraid to die.

There are three points in the consideration of Death, which appear to me to embrace the whole subject, and to which, therefore, I shall invite your most earnest attention, and these are: first, the certainty of our dying; secondly, the uncertainty of the time, place, manner, and other circumstances of Death; and thirdly, the consequences which Death entails.

Nothing is more certain than Death; it is appointed for all men once to die; nothing can save us from this dreadful doom, the sentence is general; it was pronounced on every son of Adam; millions upon millions of men have existed from the beginning of creation, and all have died and passed away like shadows. Neither wealth, nor power, nor wisdom, has been able to save any man from this general sentence; the good and the bad have died alike; no amount of virtue has been able to make such favor with God as to avert the fatal decree. The king and the peasant, the philosopher and the clown, have all died indiscriminately. They who have lived longest have died at last. Adam lived 930 years, and he died; the whole sum of the history and existence of the patriarchs of the law is contained in that pithy sentence, "they lived and died." Every descendant of Adam, every sharer of Adam's sin, must meet Adam's fate: "Of every tree of paradise," says God to him, "thou shalt eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat thereof thou shalt die the death. In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread until thou returnest to the earth from which thou wert taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." "The wages of sin is death," says St. Paul. Therefore, as sure as we are sinners, so surely shall we die. Every day, every hour, we advance nearer and nearer to our end; to the day when we shall never see the night, or to the night when we shall never see the morning. Our best and dearest friends have died; the brave, the young, the beautiful, the good, the witty, and the humorous, have all passed away before our eyes. We have seen the strong man struck down, and the strong right arm wither. We have seen the soul-speaking eye look glassy, and fixed, and expressionless. We have seen the cheek which was the seat of happy smiles and playful laughter grow stiff, and fall clammy and cold, cold as marble, in death. Where is the table from which we do not miss the loving father, the tender mother, the beautiful child, or the gay friend that we loved as a brother? We must seek for them in the churchyard, and even there we shall not find them; others have taken their place; they glow to-day with health and beauty; they cheer us to-day by their lively sallies of wit and humor: alas! to-morrow, or if not to-morrow, very, very soon their hour too shall come, and we must open once more the fountain of our tears, and learn, when it shall be perhaps too late, the sad lesson that we too must soon, and perhaps speedily, follow them. Death, therefore, is most certain; nothing can avert it. Oh! would that we would look this truth well in the face, and then, how different should be our lives!

But the fact that we shall all die is not more certain than that the circumstances accompanying death are uncertain. Shall we die in the morning or in the evening, at noonday or midnight: shall death come in the spring-time or in the gay bright summer? When shall we die? Shall it be after ten years' time, or twenty? Shall it be next year, next month, next week, to-morrow, or to-day? Oh! think of it; is any one of us sure that he shall live to-day, until the setting of the sun? Believe me there is at this moment throughout the world, many a man who rejoices in his youth, and strength, and manly beauty, who little dreams of dying or preparing for death, and yet who, before the sun goes down, shall die; he shall lose his life by accident, or by the visitation of God; his body shall lie cold and rigid in the midst of his weeping and horrified friends, while his soul shall have passed before his Maker, and received that mysterious sentence which shall consign him to eternal bliss or eternal misery! At this moment the green grass is beginning to shoot over many a fresh grave, wherein lie the remains of the youth or maiden who but a week ago was the pride of a family, and the centre of all their brightest hopes and most ardent affections! When shall we die? Shall it be in the moment when pleasure is sweetest, and life most endearing? or shall it be in the hour of melancholy and affliction, when Death itself cannot add another pang to our broken hearts? No one knows, but God alone. How shall we die? Shall it be after a long and painful illness, with full warning and full preparation; or shall we be struck down suddenly without time enough to say, God, have mercy on us? Shall we die by sickness, or by accident? we know not. Where shall we die? In the city or in the country? In our own or in a foreign land? Shall we die on the stormy sea, and shall our bones lie in its fathomless depths forgotten? Shall our friends stand around our bedside and soothe our last pangs? or shall we die away from every face which might impart sweetness even to that bitter hour? No one can tell; all these things are buried in mystery. We only know that we shall die, but when, or where, or how we shall die is known only to the Omnipotent God. Have you ever seen any one die? Oh! what a fearful spectacle! There lies the victim on his death-bed; let us suppose him an unrepentant sinner, for the death-bed has no terrors for the just. He is young, and has brought on his own premature decay by excessive dissipation. His cheeks are sunken, hollow, and pale; his eyes stare wildly and vacantly about; Death he fears, he knows is coming, and when he looks back over the dark history of his short life he begins to feel like Cain, that his sins are too great to be forgiven; the minister of God stands by and seeks to console him; the holy man extols the mercies of God, and paints the picture of Magdalen, and the repentant thief; his friends try every expedient to bring his mind into a proper train of thought; all is vain, his pains are too violent, and his mind is too agonized, to think of any time except the present. He falls at length into a stupor, it is the immediate precursor of Death; his breathing is slow and hard; his chest heaves at every respiration, slower and more slowly, and then at length the last sigh, and life is fled; he lies a cold, white lump of clay before his friends, while his soul has passed before his Maker, and received, alas! the fatal sentence of eternal condemnation.

Then remember the fatal consequences of Death—the consequences to soul and body; the body is one of the most loathsome objects in the world, so much so that it is painful to look at it, to think of it, to describe it; but it is better to be harsh to our sensibilities for once than to have them grated on forever because we would not think on a bitter truth. So loathsome is the body of the dead man, that his friends are the first to remove it with all haste from the house, lest the horrible stench emanating from it may infect the air; and then, whither is that body removed? It is wrapped in a shroud—nailed up in a coffin and buried deep in the cold, damp earth. The worms soon find their prey; and that form, that once excited the admiration of men, and drew forth many an extravagant compliment to its grace and beauty, seems after one week in the grave the most hideous, disgusting, abominable spectacle which it is possible for the eyes to contemplate, or even the imagination to conceive. And then the consequences to the immortal soul—"It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment"—there is the great secret that makes Death so awful—the judgment. The moment after the soul has been separated from the body it stands before God, and must render to Him an account of all the thoughts, words, and actions of which it was the cause or occasion since the dawn of reason. It is the thought of this frightful judgment that makes Death so terrible to the dying sinner. He turns himself every way to seek comfort and consolation, and can find none: all the oaths, blasphemies, impurities, and other criminal excesses of which he was guilty during life then stare him in the face, and fill his soul with the horrors of despair. When looking back into his past life, he can find no good action performed purely for God, which might at all counterbalance the immense load of guilt in the other scale. He thinks of all the grace he has overlooked, the talents he has neglected, the time he has lost, the sacraments he has despised—he lived for the world, and the world now abandons him. Such a dismal scene of woe is presented to his mind by the contemplation of the terrors of approaching judgment, that he might exclaim, with the words of the Psalmist: "The sorrows of death have compassed me, and the perils of hell have found me." He must leave behind him all that his heart held dear—his wealth, his lands, his houses, the smiles of friends and children dear to him as life, his fond and faithful wife. He would give all his possessions for another year, another day of life. No, Death cannot be propitiated by entreaties, nor bought by gold. The moment has come—he has ceased to breathe forever. Oh, if he had lived differently, how different would be his end! If he had approached the sacraments at proper times and received the grace of God; if he had devoted as much energy and zeal to the service of his Maker as he did to the pursuit of temporal happiness, he might exclaim in his dying hour, with the royal Prophet: "Though I should walk in the midst of the shadows of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou, O Lord, art with me."

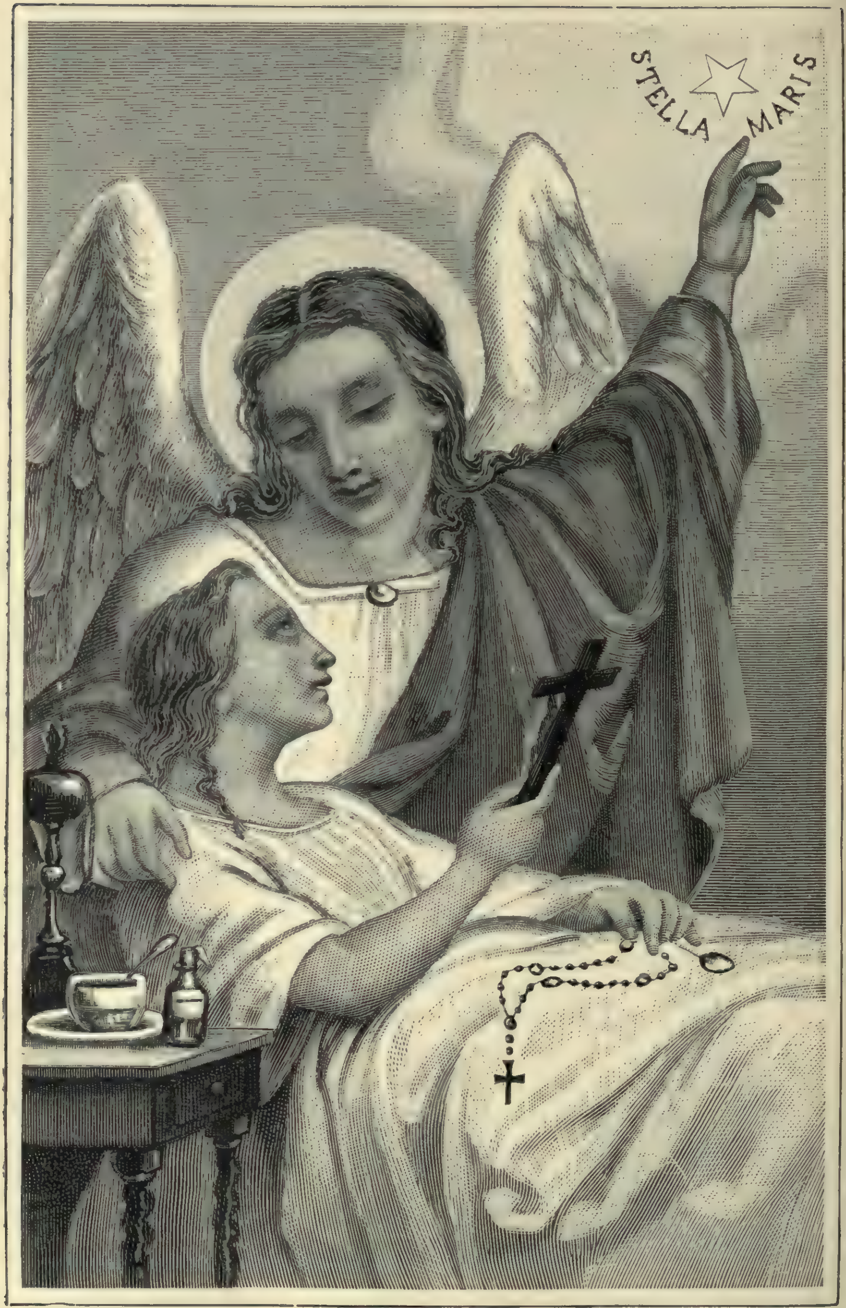
Now, my brethren, from all these considerations it is clear that for us Death is the most important of all subjects, and that it is the only subject worthy of engaging all our interest and attention. On it depends our happiness or misery for all eternity. If we die well, we shall be glorified with God forever—if we die ill, we shall be burning, in hell's fire, as long as God shall be God, for all the days of eternity. That we must die at some time is most certain: "It is appointed for all men once to die." Therefore we ought most assuredly prepare for that last hour, on which so much depends. The hour of Death is most uncertain: it therefore follows that we should not only prepare for Death, but that we should be always prepared; for we know not "the day nor the hour, and the Son of Man will come at the hour when we least expect Him."

If a man could die twice he would certainly die well the second time, for the horrible memory of hell's torments would make him endure anything rather than run the risk of suffering them again. But, alas! we can only die once. "It is appointed for all men once to die." What is there that you ever did once and did well? Did you ever succeed in doing well at the first attempt? You now can walk; but when you first tried the operation you toppled over and fell to the ground; you can now write well, but your first attempts were wretched failings; you have seen men plough for many a day and scarcely ever deviate from a straight line, but when they first handled the plough it went crooked and did not turn up the earth properly—and why? they had tried it only once: so in like manner is there not great danger that when we die once we may not die well? Oh! what a terrible thing to think of; but although we can make the trial but once, we can succeed by the grace of God. There is nothing which we may not do, when aided by His grace. But how can a man expect to die well who never thinks of the subject at all—who shuns the thought of it as if it were Death itself? The arrows of Death are falling around us every day—our fellow-men drop down beside us, before us, and on every side, and yet we fancy that we shall be the last to be struck. We follow the pleasures and vanities of this world as the butterfly follows the flowers of the field; but, oh! it is only when we are dying we shall see the empty phantom we were pursuing; for as the world will then be past, we shall then see in its true colors the nothingness of everything on which we set our hearts. Ah! how despicable will then appear to us the honors and distinctions of this world, where the worm shall show no more respect to the king than to the beggar! How contemptible shall then appear to us the wealth and riches of this world, for which we may have toiled and labored, and probably hastened the approach of our last hour, when a coffin and a shroud shall be our only possession! Oh! then how clearly we shall see the wickedness of sin and the folly of not having lived for God, for Him alone! How beautiful virtue shall appear: how delightful the ways of God! Then we shall feel the force of the words of the wise man, who has said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." When will you be prepared to die? Are you ready now? If Jesus Christ stood on the altar this moment, and said that some of us should immediately die, which of us would not tremble? And justly. And it is very certain that before long some one of us here assembled will die. Of the congregation which was present in this church twelve months ago, have not some passed before their Maker, and received their eternal doom? It was their turn yesterday, it may be ours to-day. Oh! then be always prepared. Remember the only object of your living is that you should die well; we came into the world for no other end; it is the great lesson we must all study. "Think of thy last end and thou shalt never sin." When you rise in the morning, think that you may not live till night, and when night comes imagine you may never see the morning.

Oh, God grant us the grace to live well, that so we may learn to die well. Grant us the grace to keep Thy commandments and to observe Thy law, that our souls may "die the death of the just, our end be like to theirs."

REVEREND THOMAS MAGUIRE.

Reverend THOMAS MAGUIRE delivered a course of Lenten Lectures in the city of Dublin, Ireland, in answer to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and his fame achieved therefrom is widespread. Selections from these lectures are as follows.


STELLA MARIS

Mary will Help Thee.

"THE CHURCH INFALLIBLE, OR NO CHURCH."

DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS:—In this lecture I propose to give some further proofs of the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth with regard to the Church, which is upon earth, but is not of earth. The authority of the Church was not of this earth, but of Divine, spiritual authority, to which every man, woman, and child in the world, who has understanding, is bound to captivate their reason to the obedience of faith. It was right to take a view of the other side of the question, and I will allude to it in my next lecture, which will be upon the subject of infallibility. It is said that the promises of God to the Church are only conditional, and that as great and as bountiful promises were made to the Jewish Church, and that they were conditional; therefore, the promises made to the Christian Church were only conditional also. I answer, that the promises given to the Jewish Church were given upon certain conditions, namely, that they should obey the laws and follow His Commandments; but in all the promises made by God to the new Church, neither God Himself nor any of the Apostles ever made mention of a single condition upon which the promises made to the Church were to be ratified, therefore the question is at once answered, that the promises to both churches were alike. St. Paul states that the new law is superior to the old law; if, then, the promises to both churches were alike, then the new law could not be superior to the old. Those who differ in religion with me must admit that the new Church is superior to the old, or St. Paul must be a liar, and there are not many who would say that such is the case, for all Christians agree that he was an inspired writer. Let us come to the fact: did God in His promises in the old law always say these promises shall be fulfilled if you do so and so, otherwise I shall scatter you as chaff before the winds? All may recollect the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the manner in which he was persecuted, because he foretold the destruction that was about to come upon the Jewish people because of their evil doings; he told them that their Church would be abandoned, and that God would not receive sacrifice from them, and that they would be scattered before the four winds of heaven; but that God would raise up a new Church, and a clean offering would be offered up from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof. Did not Moses say that another would come greater than he? There is a text quoted from St. Paul, where he writes to the Roman Church, and bids them not exult over the Jews, because they were grafted upon the trunk of the vine, for, says he, God has lopped off the branches of the vine because they were not fruitful, and may not spare them either if they proved unfaithful. He could not be expected to spare the olive when He did not spare the vine itself. Now, Paul was then writing to the church at Rome, not to the Catholic Church; the church at Rome was composed of converted Jews and Gentiles, and was written to prevent any jealousy arising amongst them, but by no means applied to the Church of Christ; for if one church or fifty were lopped off, yet God would raise up hundreds of churches to take their place. When the churches of Ephesus, Corinth, and numbers of others were destroyed, numberless others were raised up in Africa, Asia, and America, so that instead of the Church being lessened it was multiplied. If the church at Rome was swallowed up by an earthquake, the Church would not be lessened, for God would raise up other churches to take its place. If the fall of any one branch of the Church by its fall could injure the whole or destroy it, so also would the fall of Judas have destroyed the entire college of the Apostles, but it was not so. But, taking it for granted that St. Paul did write to the church at Rome, and took it as the entire Church, he said if they did not adhere to the faith, they would be scattered and destroyed. Nearly nineteen centuries have gone by since, and yet the Church remains unshaken, as blooming and fresh as ever it was; so that the Church that has kept its faith unbroken for nineteen centuries has certainly a visible sign of possessing the grace of God. The Catholic Church is this moment giving instruction and canon law to all the churches of the world; there is no church upon earth so universal, therefore God did not cut it off as the threat would imply, giving the adversary the benefit of his own argument that such was the meaning of the text.

I would be glad to know what answer those who argue against the infallibility of the Church would give to these passages—"Those who do not hear the Church, let them be unto thee as the heathen and the publican,"—"The Church is the pillar and the ground of truth,"—"Behold, I am with you even to the end of time,"—"They who hear thee, hear me: whose sins ye loose, shall be loosed; whose sins ye retain, shall be retained,"—"They who despise thee, despise me, and they who despise me, despise Him that sent me." I cannot see any conditions here. No; God made no conditions with His Church: He is the guide and spirit of that Church, and, therefore, it cannot err. The Church of which Christ is the head cannot teach damnable idolatry and blasphemous superstition.

Again, it is said, you, sir, say much of the authority of the Church, of its infallibility, and of its unity; but you have not proved that that Church is the Roman Catholic Church. I answer, that as the Church of Christ must be infallible, and as the Roman Catholic Church is the only Church that in all ages, and at all times, and in all places, ever laid claim to infallibility, it must therefore be the Church of Christ. Again, it may be said that the "infallible Church" was meant to apply to the elect only; for, according to Holy Writ, "many are called, but few are chosen," which it is said applied to the outward Church. But St. Paul denies that such was the meaning; for, as the elect are only known to God, how could it apply to the Church at all? For, if the Church be in error, none of the elect can be in the Church at all. God did not bid them preach to the elect, but to all nations and people, telling them, "he that heareth you, heareth me,"—"behold I am with you even to the end of time." Could God be with a church teaching idolatry and error?

A more plausible objection remains, however, which, to my own knowledge, has been quoted one thousand times over. "Upon what authority do you believe in the existence of a God? 'It would be blasphemy to say you believed it upon the authority of the Church or the Scriptures, for that would be placing these authorities above God Himself; for before you can believe in the Scriptures you must believe in the existence of a God. We must then believe that there is a God by reason, therefore God has given us no guide but "reason with grace" to believe in Himself, and as reason is our guide for the first great thing appertaining to our salvation, we need no other guide for minor matters.'" I have read this from the very work read to this day in Trinity College, so that no one can say I coined it; and now for its exposition. The essence of it may be brought into one point, that is, that as the existence of a God is discovered by reason, so we need no other guide to discover anything else. It is plausible and ingenious, but the touchstone of truth will soon expose its fallacy. We know from external causes, the sun, moon, stars, and the beings that surround us, that there must be some primary cause of all these, some being from whom all these emanated, and therefore we feel there is such a being; but can reason fathom the impenetrable mystery that surrounds that being? Could reason teach us to know that God was one being in three distinct persons, so perfect, that when the Son died God lived, and yet the Trinity was unbroken? Could reason tell us that Jesus was God instead of man, the offspring of Mary and Joseph?

"Vere tu es latus Deus."

All Christians admit the existence of the Trinity, and surely they must admit that reason could never find out such a thing, or comprehend it even when found out. No matter what God may tell us, we are bound to believe it—no matter what He may direct us to do, whether it be opposed to our feelings, our senses, and our reason, we are bound to do it. As in the case of Abraham, we find that when he was at that time of life when he could not be supposed to have offspring, the Lord told him He would multiply his seed even to the number of the sands of the sea, and he had soon after a son born to him; and when this his only child was grown up to manhood, God ordered him to sacrifice his only child upon the altar. Abraham did not begin to reason upon the matter —he did not say to God, you promised to multiply my seed, and if you cut off my son, my race cannot be multiplied. This would be the Protestant way of doing things by "reason." He took his son as the Lord had commanded, and was about to sacrifice him, and the Lord was pleased, and did not need the sacrifice. St. Paul said Abraham was justified by faith, and St. James said he was justified by works, by preparing to obey the Lord, even at the sacrifice of all that was dear to him in life. "It would be blasphemous to believe the existence of God upon the authority of the Scriptures or of the Church." I take up the assertion, and I say, if so, it would be blasphemous to believe it upon the authority of reason; for it would be setting up reason as superior to God also. The man who wrote that work said, that it would be blasphemy for father, mother, or nurse to teach a child that there was a God, for if they believed such a thing upon their authority, it would be blasphemous—they should suffer reason alone to inform the child of such a being. This argument of reason being the means of discovering the existence of a Supreme Being, was constantly put to uneducated persons.

The next argument was, that the Jews, by following the dictates of their Church, put the "holy one of Sion" to death, imbrued their hands in the blood of the Son of the living God, and rejected Him when He came to be their deliverer from the hands of the evil one; and also by authority of their Church, *ergo aparissima*, that the Catholics are guilty of all manner of crime by following the dictates of the Church rather than the wild dictates of erring reason. I reply to this, that all who read Malachi, Jeremiah, or Isaiah, will see that the Messiah was foretold —that they would go into council against Him—that they would buffet Him and cast Him off—and, finally, that they would put Him to death. The moment the Jews had evidence against the Church, they were bound to attach themselves to the evidence. They saw that Christ came and performed miracles—they saw that He suspended nature—that He cured the blind—restored the dead to life, and fed thousands upon a few loaves. These things were evidence sufficient that He was the Messiah; but they hardened their hearts and did not receive Him. The moment they saw these evidences against the Church they should have known the old law was fulfilled, and have allied themselves to the new Church. If we saw such evidence against our Church, we would not remain with her. But Luther or Calvin did not perform miracles—Calvin employed a man to feign to be dead, and when he ordered him to arise in the name of the Lord, the man was dead in reality. Thus you see that God, in an especial manner, prevented His miracles being made the object of imposition. Could any one show where God ever said to the old Church, that it was "the pillar and the ground of truth"? Hence the absurdity of saying the old and new Church are alike. Before you can believe in an infallible church, you must find it out by reason. Why is it that when you find that church you resign that reason which led you to find it? This being another of the sophistical arguments used, I will briefly answer it. Reason must be used to find out the existence of a God; and by the exercise of reason you find out that you are but a contingent being—that some other being has given you birth, and that such has been the state of billions of your kind before you. You must then believe in a primary cause of all; and when by the exercise of reason you find out that primary cause, that mighty Being, are you not to believe Him?—for they would have you examine even what God Himself tells you before you believe it. I will go so far as to say, that reason can find out the true Church by its outward signs, viz.:—Unity, Catholicity, Apostolicity. It is united, because the same doctrine is taught in it. Catholic, because spread in every country, all over the world; and Apostolic, because the succession of the Apostles has been regularly kept up through its bishops even to the present day; and where is the Church upon earth, save the Roman Catholic Church, can boast of these three signs?

The Protestants may say our Church exists in France, in India, in Asia, in America, and in England, but it was not its universality in any one age that was to be its mark, but its universality in all ages from the coming of Christ to the present day—so that they could not point out a single church until the days of Luther and Calvin; theirs could not have been the universal church throughout all ages. If a Turk or a Jew came to me and showed that their churches had the signs of the true church, and that they could show that such was the case, then I would resign myself to them, because the church was the guide to salvation, and by the church man must be brought to Christ. For example, if a man have a suit at law his first inquiry is who is the best pleader, and having found him out, he resigns his suit into his hands and rests satisfied; thus reason is exercised to a certain point, but no farther. But with a Protestant the argument would be quite different, because he admits the four Gospels.

and the Epistles of St. Paul, St. John, and St. Peter, and from these I would prove the existence of an infallible Church having both visible and invisible signs. But if an atheist was to be argued with, the first thing would be to prove the existence of a God, and having proved that, all the other proofs would follow. If arguing with a Deist, the first thing would be to prove revelation; but as I said before, with a Protestant the case was quite different, because there was a common ground fixed between them, which was the Scriptures. From the Scriptures I would prove that Jesus Christ established a true Church upon earth, and when He could remain no longer with it in a visible form, He said He would ask God the Father to send another "Paraclete" to come and reside with it, to be its guide in all things, even to the end of the world. Now, by this. God is evidently with the Church, and therefore the Church cannot teach error, but is infallible; and as the Catholic Church is the only Church which from the beginning claimed the right of infallibility, so it must be the Church established by Christ, of which He said, "Though persecution and oppression shall be raised against it, and all the storms of man's power shall oppress it, yet it should remain unshaken, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I would appeal to St. Esther and St. Ruth, and all the other saints that have been canonized even in their own church, and from their writings I would prove the existence of an infallible church. I would prove very easily that the universal reason of man was fallible; for by reason no man could tell who was his mother, all he knows of it is that his neighbors have told him that such was the case, and knowing that they had no reason to conspire to deceive him, he believes it. We know by the same evidence that in the reign of Augustus, a man was born and that He said He was the Son of God, and that all who saw Him saw God, and that He was crucified by the Jews—but He went farther than statement to prove His Divinity, for He suspended nature, He calmed the tempest and bid the waves of the sea be hushed, He walked upon the water, He cured the lame and made the blind see, and He raised Lazarus, who was in a state of putrefaction, in the presence of the Jews and Gentiles, and yet they believed Him not; He said He came to establish a society upon earth, and He told those who were about to follow Him that they would be buffeted and kicked and spit upon, but that they should not rebuke those who persecuted them, but bear all for His sake, for that neither the persecutions of man or the gates of hell should prevail against them, and that His Church was the pillar and the ground of truth, that He would be with it at all times even to the end of the world. These promises were made in the presence of Jews and Gentiles, and many of them who heard Him make these promises orally were converted, so that the new Church existed long before the Scriptures were written. The Jews agreed to the Church, and admitted its jurisdiction in spiritual matters before the Scriptures were written, for we find that they appealed to the Church against St. Paul and Barnabas, and when the Church decided against them they submitted to the decision; thus at once proving the right of the Church to correct private judgment. Thousands were saved by the Church of Christ long before a single line of the Scriptures were written, so that the Church existed even before the Scriptures. If I asked a Protestant to prove the Scriptures he would attempt to do so by private judgment, and if I asked him to prove the right of private judgment he would prove it by the Scriptures; so that his law of private judgment merely existed upon the Scriptures. Being admitted as proved, it might be a convenient faith, but it was such a one that I would not like to profess. I will not now go further, but promise that I will not leave the subject while one shade of doubt remains. I shall confine myself to argument, and by it, with the blessing of Christ, gather the stray sheep into the true fold, of which Jesus Christ is the guardian and the shepherd.

ANSWERS TO ALL THE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

IN this lecture I promised to prove that the two books of Maccabees are canonical and inspired by the Holy Ghost, and from them I will prove that prayers for the dead were recommended.

Judas Maccabees, who was high-priest and leader of the Jews, after a great battle against the enemies of God, made a collection among his soldiers of two thousand rams, a year old, and offered them as a sin-offering for such of the soldiers as were killed in the battle, that they might be loosed from their sins. The Protestants have this book in their Bible, but they call it apocryphal. They do not say whether it is scriptural or not, but make it a line-ball, neither one side or the other; and lest they would be entirely wrong, they bind it up with the rest of the Bible, and say that it, with some other books which they also mark apocryphal, can be read "for example of life, and instruction of manners, but not to establish any doctrine.' But I must tell you that the Catholic Church never had any doubt of these books, and have from the earliest ages received them as canonical and inspired by the Holy Ghost.

St. Cyprian, in his 55th Epistle, written in the second century to Cornelius, the Pope, said, "that the books of Maccabees were holy and inspired." St. Ambrose, who converted St. Augustine, in his second book upon Jacob, states, "that the books of Maccabees are inspired by the Holy Ghost." St. Isadore, in his sixth book, expressly declares "they are scriptural, and should be received as the word of God." St. Augustine, in his eighteenth book, upon the cities of God, states that "these books were unanimously received by the Third Council of Carthage," at which he himself was present; and in his first book, "*De cura pro mortibus*," he says, "that in the second book of Maccabees we read of sacrifices being offered for the dead"; but that, even if no proof of the Scriptures could be found, the evidence and opinion of the Church would be no small authority. St. Augustine is looked up to by the Protestants themselves as very high authority in matters of faith. I shall, however, prove that these books are canonical upon the authority of the Protestant Church, that is, from the highest Protestant authority in the world, the College of Oxford.

The octavo volume of the Bible published long since, and half a century before they took their present "Papistical turn," as their Protestant friends say, contains the text of the book of Maccabees relative to the offering of Judas Maccabees for the souls of the soldiers slain in battle; and in the marginal note opposite, there is a reference to St. John, 10th chap., 22d v., in which you will find the following words: "And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem; and it was winter." 23d v., "And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." This is showing the origin of the feast to celebrate which Christ and the Apostles went up to Jerusalem; so that we have here a proof that the feast established by Judas Maccabees two hundred and fifty years before Christ, as the day upon which offering was made for the souls of the soldiers, was the feast of the dedication. The holiday was made by Judas Maccabees, who said it was a holy and a pious thing to pray for the dead. The Jews had no authority for two hundred and fifty years for keeping that feast but the book of Maccabees. If, then, it was not an inspired book, and received by the church of the old law, would the Jews have observed it? No; they would not, for they were very exact in acting according to the rules laid down in the law of God. But, some say that Christ accused them of being "too apt to observe the traditions of men, and too neglectful of the weighty things of the law."

You know how they accused Christ of healing the sick upon the Sabbath day, and how they also accused the disciples of pulling a few ears of corn on the Sabbath day. So that they would not have observed it as a great feast, if it was not handed down to them upon unquestionable authority. The Holy Ghost has declared that it would be accursed to hold any feast unless by the authority of the Lord; and if this feast was not canonical, and according to the will of God, would Jesus and the Apostles have gone up to celebrate it? The Protestants may ask, how will you prove that this was the feast Christ went up to? I answer, there never was any other feast of the dedication; besides, if I had not one single proof but the one from the Oxford Bible, that is a sufficient proof that it was the same feast. It was that passage, in support of prayers for the dead, that made Luther oppose these books; but the Protestants have too much respect for the Word of God to throw any of it away, and, therefore, they bind it up with the rest of the Scriptures.

I verily believe that the greatest fault Protestants have, is their own zeal for the sacred writings. According to St. Peter, many of them have wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction and confusion; for from this spring the innumerable sects of the present day—and no two of them agreed upon any one point of doctrine.

I think Protestants cannot get out of this easily; for here is their own

Bible fully proving that prayers for the dead are holy and wholesome while their doctrine teaches that they are useless—nay, sinful; but, then, they may say, our Bible is fallible as well as our Church, and thus is the error. They admit the Church was not defiled in the early ages, and that it was pure and chaste. You see that, by the authority of the earliest Church, we have the recommendation to pray for the dead, and, also, that the book of Maccabees was canonical and inspired—and having admitted this, they must admit also that prayers for the dead, as recommended in that book, is a pious and a holy thought.

I could bring forth twenty texts more, to prove that these books are canonical, and that, therefore, the existence of a third place must be evident; but, having proved, that from three great principles it must be admitted—or the existence of these principles themselves denied—I shall, therefore, content myself by giving one or two texts more, and then leave the matter to the minds of those who wish further to consider it.

Our blessed Lord said, "A sin against the Father will be forgiven, and a sin against the Son will be forgiven, but a sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven either in this or the other world." A sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven either in this or the other world shows clearly that some sins are forgiven in this world, and that some are referred to be forgiven in the next world. St. Augustine says that this passage clearly means that some sins were forgiven in the other world. When Christ said this, could not the Jews have said to Him, that there were no sins forgiven in the other world, and thus confound His words? But they did not; and by that means they prove that they believed in the forgiveness of sins after death.

Why are sins against the Father and Son to be forgiven, and not sins against the Holy Ghost? The question is solved thus: Creation is attributed to the Father, by appropriation, through Christ; salvation is attributed to Christ, through the Father; and sanctification is attributed to the Holy Ghost, through the Father and the Son. So that the means of forgiveness is through the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, he that sins against the Holy Ghost cuts off the only channel by which forgiveness is at all to be obtained. If there never was a sin forgiven in the world to come, why would Christ say, "either in this or the other world"? It was quite clear He alluded to a state in the other world where sins were forgiven.

When it is said, "God will reward every man according to his works," faith is presupposed—for without faith works are dead, and without works faith is of no avail. Suppose Antichrist, Caligula, Nero, Antiochus, or any other of those brutes in human form, who have disgraced humanity, is to be placed in the same place of punishment with an innocent child who was not baptized, or one who had merely told a jocose lie—would it be at all consistent with our views of God's infinite mercy? And yet, such is the Protestant doctrine, which says, that there is no place where sin is purged off, or souls cleansed from venial sin, for nothing defiled can enter heaven. If such were the case, God would be unjust, and, instead of being kind and merciful, He would be wicked and tyrannical; therefore, we hold, that God has established a third place for the sanctification of souls, and that place is purgatory.

The first objection against this doctrine is, that there is no mention made of purgatory in all the Scriptures. But that cannot be said at all to affect it, inasmuch that the same argument would apply to the "Mother of God," which words were not to be found in the Scriptures either—or the word "Trinity," or "consubstantial,"—and yet, because the full substance of all these things were to be found in the Scriptures, no one doubted them. Therefore, I say, that the argument does not apply—because the essential proof is to be found in the Scriptures that such a place must exist, or that the greatest principles laid down in Holy Writ must be wrong.

"The blood of God cleanseth from all sin." This is one of the favorite texts of Protestants. But the text proves too much—for, if the blood of God cleanseth from all sin, there would be no need of hell or purgatory either; so that the text itself causes inquiry to be made into it. And then, we find, that, in order to make the blood of God applicable to us, we must walk in the light of grace—for, if we were to take the word as it is written, then we should say that Christianity is useless, inasmuch as that Christ did not care to die for the faithful—but for all mankind—and, therefore, if nothing else was necessary but the blood of Christ, the Turk, the Jew, and atheist would be as much heirs of heaven as the Christian.

If God did not make certain conditions upon which His grace was to be obtained and retained, He would have given a premium for sinning instead of preventing it. "He that believes will be saved, but he that does not believe shall not have everlasting life." In order to gain everlasting life, it is necessary to have faith, hope, and charity; and, also, to observe the commandments of God. By the Scriptures we know that the way of life is opened for us, and that through Christ we are reconciled to our heavenly Father again. We know that Christ did all this for us for nothing; but His laws show us that if we are to have the benefit of His passion and death, we can only have it upon the fulfilment of certain conditions, which are: to have faith, hope, and charity, and observe His commandments.

Again, it was quoted against the doctrine of purgatory, that the Lord said, "I will not remember your sins in that hour when you return from your wickedness." I say that the meaning of this text was, that He would not remember their sins so as to punish them eternally, but the temporal punishment was not alluded to. I ask, did not God forgive the sin of Adam?—and yet we find that the temporal punishment for Adam's offense is visited upon us to this hour—for we all feel the effects of that sin, by sickness, cold, hunger, thirst, and death—for man was born immortal, that he should live forever; but, through the fall of Adam, he is now destined to pass to immortality through the valley of death. If any further proof were wanted that God never remitted the temporal punishment at the same time with the eternal punishment, you have only to look to the days of the Israelites passing through the wilderness, and see how He destined them to wander for forty years through it, because they had worshipped the golden calf—and see that, though He forgave them the immortal punishment, yet He would not forgive the mortal or temporal punishment.

Ecclesiastes—"Where the tree falls, there it shall lie." This text was in the mouth of every babbling, canting creature that wishes to oppose Catholicity. But I shall give you the text as it really is, with the proper interpretation. "If the tree fall to the North, or to the South, or to any other place, there it shall lie." Now, from this, it is evident there is somewhere else for the tree to fall besides the North, which means hell, or the South, which means heaven. If there was no place but hell or heaven for it to fall into, the Holy Ghost would not have written, "or any other place."

The real meaning of the text is, that as long as we are in this life, that is the time to bear good fruit—for when we are cut down, so far as our own works go, there we must remain; for the moment we leave this life, we are incapable of doing anything to please God, our day of probation being passed. The Protestant interpretation was superlatively ridiculous. David, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and all the just, up to the time of Christ, were all cut down; and I ask, where were they until Christ opened the way for them into the kingdom of heaven? Were they in the hell of the damned? O! no. The Protestants themselves would not say they were there. St. Peter said that no one ever entered the kingdom of heaven until Christ came, and by His death opened the road to heaven. "Jesus led captivity captive"—showing that He descended into the hell of the holy patriarchs, and led from it Abraham, Isaac, and all the faithful, who had died believing in the Lord on His promise of a Messiah. They fell like the tree, and could not raise themselves; but Christ, by His passion and cross, raised them to a state of life. Just so, those who fall in this day, they cannot raise themselves, but they are risen by the prayers of the just, and by the good works of the faithful. The prayers of the Church—which is in this world, but is not of this world—can raise up the fallen tree which has fell in the faith, and thus lead it to eternal life. As Christ raised the souls of the faithful from the place where they were detained, so He also left the same power to His Apostles, when He said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." "Lo! I shall be with you to all ages"—clearly pointing out that they were to live forever by succession, which proves the necessity of apostolic succession.

THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:—The subject of this lecture is one of considerable importance. We are accused by our separated brethren of invoking saints and angels, and we are in a very peremptory manner assured that this practice is idolatrous and superstitious. I undertake, from the Holy Scriptures, to prove that the practice of invoking the blessed in heaven is recommended both in the old and new law, and also that it is in accordance with the dictates of God Himself.

First, I shall prove that the blessed in heaven do know what is passing here, and can hear the prayers offered up to them, and that they do sympathize with us in all our wants and wishes. I shall also prove that the angels in heaven are constantly in the habit of imploring God for us, that He may strengthen us to bear up against temptation, and that the Church triumphant in heaven holds continual communion with the Church militant upon earth; and I shall also prove that God hears their prayers for us, and receives our prayers through them, which He would not do for us, because of our manifold sins.

Could I adduce no text from either the old or new law—yet, I think, the practice of the Church, from the earliest ages up to the nineteenth century, would be no small authority. But I shall quote texts from both the old and new law in support of this doctrine, until I leave those who make a scoff of it ashamed of themselves. I shall first refer to the old law, to prove that prayers to the angels were then recommended and practiced. I cannot prove prayers to the saints from the old law, because there were no saints then in heaven. "The way of the Holy of Holies was not then made clear, Christ not having yet led captivity captive."

If it be right to invoke the prayers of living men, how much more likely of success would there be, by invoking the prayers of the saints in heaven, upon whom the light of the beatific vision was eternally shining, and whose love for us is unceasing? I will prove that the prayers which we give the angels and saints do not in any way interfere with the honor due to God.

I shall refer you to Tobias, 12th chap., 15th v. But, before I read it, I must tell you that the Protestant Church calls this book one of the

Apocrypha—that is, doubtful. St. Augustine says that the Catholic Church always received it as canonical, and that it was insolent madness to doubt the authority of the Catholic Church. But, even supposing that it was apocryphal, the very fact that such was the belief of the Church at that early period, when the Protestants themselves say the Church was undefiled, is a strong proof in favor of the argument, and clearly demonstrates that we have not been innovating by practicing the invocation of saints—it being practiced and approved of by the Church four thousand years ago. The text is—"Raphael is one of the seven spirits that stand before God, and when Tobias offered up his prayers for the people, and when he buried the dead by night, I said Raphael offered them to God." Here you see that the prayers of the just are offered to God by the hands of His angels. You may remember what Eliphaz said to Job, in the midst of all his troubles and privations—(5th chap., 1st v.): "Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?" The seventy interpreters put in the word "saints," because they knew that at the time there were none of the saints in heaven, and his observations must have been "angels." But it proves that angels could assist us in our necessities. You will find that, after God restored all his property to Job, and gave him happiness and comfort, God menaced his true friends, and declared that unless they went and offered up sacrifice, and got His servant Job to intercede for them, He would not forgive them—thus at once establishing the doctrine of intercession; for when they did go, and that Job offered sacrifice, the Lord accepted it and forgave them.

I may be told that Job was then a living man. But if God would listen to Job, who was but a sinner, how much sooner would He hear the prayers of the just, who are honored by being taken into heaven.

St. Paul besought the prayers of the Hebrews and the Colossians for himself. Now, if the prayers of those people for St. Paul could take from his prayers to Christ, would he have asked them to pray for him? Surely he would not, and, therefore, we have another proof of the doctrine of intercession. St. Paul tells us, that when faith and hope are dead, charity still lives, showing that the same feelings of charity and love which we have in this life, still exist, and that we are still as anxious and solicitous for those we have left behind, as we were while we were with them. So that, even though enjoying the beatific vision, we never fail to pour forth our orisons to God for those whom we have loved in this life.

David, in his 138th Psalm, says, "I will praise Thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praises unto Thee." Here David calls the angels gods—"I will sing praises before the gods." If the angels could not hear, surely he would not sing praises before them, for no man would sing before deaf people.

Again, you remember the description that Christ gave of Dives, who was buried in hell, and how he looked up and saw Lazarus, who was in Abraham's bosom; and he asked that he might be suffered to come and dip his finger in water, and put one small drop in his mouth, for that he was burning with heat; but he was refused. And, again he asked, would Lazarus be sent back to the world, to tell his three brothers of his awful state, and to warn them from following his footsteps; but this he was also refused—because they had Moses and the prophets, and if they would not believe them, they would not believe a man risen from the grave. How did Abraham know that they had Moses—for he was dead long before Moses was born—if those in heaven did not know what passed upon earth? So that, by this, we have a double proof—the one, that Abraham knew what was doing upon earth; and the other, that Dives remembered his brothers, and was concerned that they might not fall into torture like himself.

Again, in the Apocalypse of John, 2d chap., 26th v., "And he that shall overcome, and keep my works unto the end, to him I will give power over the nations." (27th v.), "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and as the vessel of a potter they shall be broken." Now, this proves that the saints, after death, live with God, and have power given them over countries and nations. How, then, could they exercise this power, if they did not know what was passing on earth?

Genesis, 48th chap., 15th v., "And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day." 16th v., "The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."—He prayed first to God, and then he calls upon the angel to watch over them: here then is a prayer directly to an angel. Zachariah, 1st chap., 12th v., "Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts! how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" Here the angel is represented interceding with the great God for these devoted cities. Daniel, 10th chap., 21st v., "But I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth, and there is none that holdeth with me in these things but Michael, your prince." Here Michael the archangel is represented standing up before God, invoking His favor for the children of the people. 1 Kings, 15th chap., 4th v., "Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem." Here we see that through love of David, his son, though a wicked one, was suffered to succeed him.

Isaiah, 37th chap., 4th v., "It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard; wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left." Jeremiah, 15th chap., 1st v., "Then saith the Lord, though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people." Now Moses and Samuel were long since dead, and if Moses or Samuel did not intercede for the people, what manner of speech would this be for the living God? Here then are proofs in favor of the doctrine of invocation of saints, which has been for ages attacked by Protestants with all the blasphemous fury of a Voltaire, to the delight of the atheist, the deist, and the socialist, against the doctrine of Christianity itself. Ezekiel, 14th chap., 20th v., "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it; as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Now Noah and Job were both dead, and yet He put them with Daniel, who was living; and if it was not lawful to call for the intercession of the dead, would God have said this? Joseph lived several years after Elias was translated from this world, and after Joseph, his son Joram succeeded to the kingdom: and failing to walk rightly in the law, Elias wrote him a letter, although he was dead many years before his father, and in the letter he tells him that God would strike him and his people with a plague, because he had forsaken him and followed other gods. Now when Elias could write this letter from a place which was not heaven, nor could it be the hell of the damned, and yet it was not this world; it was clear that in all places out of this world the recollection of this life remains.

The Rev. gentleman also quoted passages from the Second Homily or Numbers, and also from the writings of the holy fathers, in support of his argument, and then proceeded:—Apocalypse, 5th chap., 8th v., "And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the elders fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps, and vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints." Here we see that the saints in heaven offer up the prayers of the faithful on earth. 8th chap., 3d v., "Another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God." Here again we have proof of the prayers being offered by the angels to God, in order that they might be made the more acceptable. 1 Tim., 4th chap., 16th v., "Attend to thyself and to doctrine, be earnest in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." If then poor sinful man by his preaching, by his ministry, and by his example, could help to save others, how much more power must those saints in heaven have who are endowed with immortality? What absurdity! what inconsistency of Protestants to be harping at us for invoking saints, while they themselves have their holidays, and believe in the doctrine of "guardian angels." With what degree of consistency can they charge us with what they commit themselves? I warn them in the face of high heaven not to bear false witness against their neighbors. It is a terrible thing for Protestants to charge us with idolatry, because we honor those whom God honors Himself.

Origen, in the third book on the Canticle of Canticles, states, "that there is more joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, than for ninety-nine just." If the angels did not know what was passing on this earth, how could they rejoice at the conversion of sinners? He then proceeds—"I will fall down upon my knees, and not presuming to offer my own prayers, I shall invoke all the saints and angels to intercede for me with sighs and tears that my prayers may be acceptable to the living God."

St. Cyprian, who flourished early in the third century, or late in the second, says, "Let us be mindful of each other in this life and in the next"—showing that charity did not die in the other world. In his 57th Epistle to the martyrs, he says, "Boldly go forth, advance in spirit, die happily; but then, remember us." Again, we find the Angel Gabriel saluted the Virgin Mary with—"Hail! Mary, full of grace"—and the holy fathers from the earliest ages have said, "Mother of God, intercede for us." Catholics and Christians need not be ashamed to do that which these great martyrs and saints did; and if they share the same reward—a glorious eternity—it will be the blessing I wish you all.

* * *

ANSWERS TO ALL THE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

MY DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—In another lecture I went at some length into the real doctrine of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church upon the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist; and I stand pledged now to give the remainder of the proofs in favor of that doctrine, and also to answer some of the leading arguments urged against it.

It has been said by a Protestant clergyman to myself, that no matter how strong, how cogent, how convincing the arguments which I might bring in support of this doctrine, yet that the adversaries of our religion would still say, that the expressions used in the sixth chapter of St. John are clearly meant to be read as *figuratively*, not *really:* "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; he that eats of this bread shall live forever." It would be said, you must eat the flesh of Christ spiritually, not really; so that my arguments are misapplied in any other sense. Now, I answer this learned clergyman, this honest man—for I believe there are many who really seek information upon this subject for information sake; that it is now my duty to answer all reasonable or tangible objections that may be brought forward against this doctrine, and leave the result to God Almighty Himself. It is my duty to remove every obstacle, and take away every doubt that the words of St. John, in his sixth chapter, can only be read *really*, and in the true meaning of their substance, and that if read *figuratively*, it is infamous heresy.

Mark, beloved brethren! if I shall be able to prove this task which I propose to myself—if I shall be able to answer these arguments in an irrefragable manner, then they have not a single shadow of pretext for continuing to disbelieve this doctrine; and if they cannot believe it entirely, they are bound to go back to first principles—to that Church from which they have ceded, or otherwise be convinced in their own hearts, in the sight of God, and perversely oppose what they know to be true.

I will give Protestants precedence in supposition, and I will make a most favorable hypothesis for them. The gentleman who made the objection to me—not from himself, but from the congregation to which he belonged—if present, I hope will attend to my answer, as I am determined, as far as God gives me power, to clear up any difficulty that stands in the way of my dear Protestant brethren embracing the dogmas of that Church from which they have been too long separated.

Here is my dilemma. Did Christ teach His Apostles whether His words, as written in the sixth chapter of St. John, were to be received and believed really and substantially, or figuratively and spiritually? To say that God did not teach them would be blasphemy. Whether Christ taught them after the Holy Ghost had descended upon their heads, or before He died, was immaterial, provided He taught them at all; and I hope, for the sake of Christianity, there is no man base enough to deny that God did teach the Apostles in what sense they were to receive these words; and that when they separated all over the world, that they taught the real meaning of Christ to all the churches where they went. John, 6th chap., 52d v., "If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." Now, if the Protestant Church be right—but, then, I do not mean the entire Protestant Church, because I know that vast numbers of the Church of England are with us as to the real presence, but I speak of those who hold Calvinistic doctrine, and all those sects that deny the real presence—and of them I say if they be right, and that Christ only meant that His words should be taken figuratively, surely they will admit that He taught His Apostles what was the true sense of His words; and that they taught in all the churches to which they went the real meaning of their Lord and Master, when He said, "this is my body, and this is my blood,"—"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Now, if the Apostles thought that His body and blood, soul and divinity, were not to be found in this Sacrament, did they tell the churches of Rome, Edessa, Jerusalem, Asia Minor and Asia Major, and Philippi, and all the other churches in the world, that such was the case? This was one of the leading doctrines of the Church, one of every-day practice, even in the earliest ages of the Church; and surely they did not keep the people in ignorance of a doctrine so essential. But that they did not, I shall shortly prove; for those of the Church who were likely to perish by sea, or by persecution and martyrdom, where none of the priests could come near them, had frequently portions of this sacred bread about them that they might communicate themselves before their exit out of this life—and, therefore, it became of vital importance to inform them in what light they were to look upon the bread and wine; whether as a token of the body and blood of Christ, or as the real body and blood itself. If merely bread as a token, surely then they would be informed not to kneel before it, or to bow to it, or adore it; for it would be idolatry to bow, kneel, or adore bread. And if my hypothesis be right, and that all the early Christians were Protestants, who were taught to look upon the bread and wine as emblematical of the body and blood of Christ, then surely we will find by their acts that they neither knelt, bowed, or adored what they must have been taught to look upon as mere bread and wine. Then following up this view of the case, we should believe that all the churches in the whole world, who were opposed to each other in language, in war, in political matters, and in every relation of life (religious faith excepted), all of them believed that the Sacrament of the Eucharist was merely bread and wine, possessing no portion of the body, blood, soul, or divinity of Jesus Christ; and merely to be taken in remembrance of Him, without the slightest adoration. This is all according to the hypothesis in favor of Protestantism; but let us come and examine was such the case, and we will find that there is not a writing, there is not a liturgy, there is not a single record, either written or printed, that could prove that such an opinion ever existed until the eleventh century—and I shall show you by and by how the opinion stated just then upon the subject was received by all the churches of the known world. The entire churches of the sixth century in Asia, Africa, and Europe, bear testimony that all the people, though opposed to each other, ready to kill and murder each other in war, were all taught to believe in the real presence, and received it most determinedly; for, St. Paul says, "he that receives this bread, cr this wine, not discerning the body of the Lord, receives it to his own damnation."

I am really at a loss to know with which of the holy fathers to begin, in order to prove the universality of the belief in the doctrine of the real presence, St. Ireneus, St. Cyprian, St. Apolica, St. Celestus, or St. Ignatius, who spoke thus to the heretics of that day: "How can you admit that the true flesh of Christ is received in the Eucharist, when you deny that He took a real body at all; and assert that He merely took upon Him a figurative body, that He might die figuratively, but not really?" But supposing that the writings of St. Paul, and the opinions of all the holy fathers, were nothing—I ask who was it that began what they call "Popery"? Who was the first man that dared to say that the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was contained under the appearance of a bit of bread and a sup of wine? The whole world could not have received Papist doctrines at once; all the people could not have gone to bed denying the real presence, and rise up next morning declaring that they all believed it; some one must have begun it—who then was that man? How impossible it would have been for any individual to get others to believe that the infinite majesty of God was contained in a small bit of bread and a small drop of wine. Who would believe that Mahomet was as really present in a small bit of bread, as when he went forth sword in hand to conquer mankind? The man who would dare to commence such a story would be looked upon as the greatest impostor that ever the world knew, and yet this doctrine had a beginning somewhere; and if the people were all disbelievers in the real presence, they would have told the man who attempted to force his doctrine upon them, that they did not believe it—for if so, the Apostles would have taught them to believe that such was the case; and, no doubt, some person would have accused this man of introducing a new doctrine. But I shall proceed to prove to you that it would be as utterly impossible for man to introduce such a doctrine, as for him to solve the mystery of the blessed Trinity.

When our Divine Redeemer came upon earth, He came to found Christianity, and knowing the stiff-neckedness of the people, He began by proving His mission by miracles so stupendous, that He awed the minds of all who witnessed them; and thus having proved His divinity, He then taught them by faith to believe those things which their weak understandings could not comprehend. It was then He taught them to believe in the mighty doctrine of the Trinity, to tell them that God had three persons, really distinct and equal in all things; yet, that there were not three Gods, but only one Godhead, nature and substance, so distinct that the Father was God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, but so equal that all were alike, and so perfectly distinct, that when the Son died, the Father or the Holy Ghost did not die—and when we partake of the Son of God, we do not partake of the Father or the Holy Ghost, but of the Son.

When this tremendous mystery was proposed—a mystery which no man could admit but through the veracity of an eternal God—when it was admitted that God was born of a virgin, she still remaining a virgin—when these things were received and believed, because of the miracles of the Saviour and His Apostles, who wrought even greater miracles than Himself; for St. Peter's shadow used to cure every species of disease that it touched, and his aprons and neck-cloths cured every kind of disease also—you need not be surprised that the doctrine of the real presence was received, when the doctrine of the Son of God being born of a virgin was received; but such was the power of the miracles by which the multitude were convinced, that any doctrine, however repugnant to human understanding, that those whom they knew to be the followers of Jesus Christ proposed, would have gained credence. When they had gained the confidence of the people sufficiently to broach the doctrine of the Trinity, and gain it a hearing, then it was they brought forward the doctrine of transubtantiation.

But if it was not brought forward when these miracles were to assist in forcing it upon the stubborn minds of men, it could never have been established; for nothing but the unerring veracity of God could make men receive a doctrine so contrary to their notions of things—that the substance of Jesus Christ, soul and body, essence and divinity, was contained in a small bit of bread, or a small drop of wine, as offered in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

If this doctrine was not commenced and taught by the Apostles, who was it that commenced it? Who was the first man that broached the doctrine of Popery, as it is called? Was there no man to stand up and write a line against the new doctrine? There is not a single record in any church as to the time this doctrine was received contrary to their former notions; not a single church all over the world—Muscovite or any other church—those who used to be quarrelling about unleavened bread, shaving their beards, etc.—they never had the slightest controversy about the doctrine of transubstantiation or the real presence. If there was any dispute, who has written it down?—or where is the book to be found that contains the argument? Nowhere.

There was no difference of opinion upon the subject until the eleventh century, when Berringerius, a French friar, wrote a work, stating that Christ intended His words to be taken figuratively; and that when He said, "This is my body, and this is my blood," He meant, this is emblematical of my body and blood. To show you the consequence of his broaching this new doctrine, I must tell you that there were eleven provincial councils held upon him, and he was declared a heretic, and was anathematized. Lanfrank, who was the primate of England, wrote against this doctrine, and so did all the heads of the various churches in the world. Berringerius died anathematizing his own doctrine, and declaring that the body and blood of Christ were really and truly present in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

I will ask Protestants, and all dissenters, was not the spirit and piety of the people more active in the apostolic ages than in the eleventh century?—and yet we find, that the moment Berringerius attempted to introduce a new doctrine, he was anathematized. Surely, then, if Popery was attempted to be taught in the earlier ages, contrary to the doctrine taught by the Apostles, it would have met with a warmer opposition; and yet we do not find one word, either written or printed, showing that the doctrine was opposed until the days of Berringerius, in the eleventh century. Surely, if any new doctrine was introduced in the second, third, or fourth centuries, when the Church was flourishing—when it was making heaven rejoice, and hell tremble—it would have been opposed, when we find it so warmly opposed in the eleventh century, after the dark ages. It is quite clear, then, that this doctrine must have come down to us in another form, and under authority; and that that authority was Christ Himself to His Apostles, and that they taught it to all the churches to which they were sent to preach Christianity, and that these churches received the doctrine under the warrant of the Apostles, whose mission was proved by the stupendous miracles which they performed.

It is said that Christ had said He was many things as well as bread and wine; for instance, He said, "I am the vine," "I am the shepherd," "I am the door." This was such nonsense that I think I should not take up your time by answering them. But I will. Did Christ ever take a vine in His hand and say, "I am this vine"? Did He ever take a shepherd in His hand and say, "I am this shepherd"? Did He ever take a door in His hand and say, "I am this door"? No, He did not; but He said, "I am the door," which meant that He was the door of the Church, into which all should come by Him. "I am the good shepherd," showing that the good shepherd should lay down his life for the flock, as He was about to do. This was His meaning. If Christ at His Last Supper said, "I am this bread," He would have spoken nonsense; but He did not say so. He took the bread, and having broken it, He said, "This is my body," knowing that He had changed the substance of the bread into His body. Nor did He say, "This wine is my blood," but He said, "This is my blood," holding what was wine, but what was then transfigured into His blood. If at the marriage of Cana, in Galilee, He said, "This water is wine," He would have said nonsense, because He had really changed the substance of the water. If Moses had called his rod "a rod," after it had been changed into a serpent, he would have spoken wrong. But it had always been the custom to call things after the things from whence they came, and thus we find that the bread has been called bread after it was changed. Christ called it bread; but what bread did He call it? "I am the living bread which came down from heaven"—showing that it was not common bread, but bread that came down from heaven.

Another question is—how could Christ's body be in all places, and at all times—His body not being infinite, as well as His divinity? I will ask those who have asked this silly question, did not God make Eve out of Adam's rib? How often must God have multiplied the rib, before He could have made her body—and yet, it is quite certain that He made Eve out of the single rib; so that, as God could multiply the rib, to make Eve, He could also multiply His own body, for the spiritual food of man.

The Jews did not believe in Him, because they thought He was going to give them His flesh carnally to eat. He then showed them that the flesh was nothing; that it was the spirit that quickened, but yet they would not believe in Him. When Christ arose from the dead, He came to the Apostles, where they were assembled, shut up in a room, double locked, and He had His body with Him. He entered the room and said, "Peace be with you." How, I will ask, did He enter if His body after death was mere flesh? St. Paul says, there is a natural body which is placed in the grave, and a supernatural body that rises out of it. It is sown in corruption, but rises in incorruption; so that the body, though the same, undergoes a change. Christ was really present with the Apostles in the room; for when some doubts were expressed as to its being Him, He said, "A spirit could not have flesh and bones as I have." Now, if Christ was in that room, and had His body there, He must have entered the room in a spiritual manner. It was in the same manner we believe Him to be present on our altars, and in our sacrifice—first spiritually, and then really. We cannot fathom the mystery—neither can we fathom the mystery of the Trinity, and yet we believe it, by faith, and get credit for our belief; so, in like manner, the Catholic Church requires us to believe that He is present, soul and body, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, because He Himself has said so.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

I HAVE no will in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept sacrifice at your hands. From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place is offered unto me a pure oblation."

My dearly beloved brethren:—From these words of the ancient prophet, I shall be able, in the course of the present sermon, to demonstrate the close and inseparable connection that exists between the great and bloody sacrifice on the cross—of which this day is the glorious anniversary—and the unbloody sacrifice of the new law, the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, which is called the Sacrifice of the Mass.

As I am always most anxious that every individual—no matter how humble, how illiterate, or how shallow-minded—should fully understand everything I say, in all its bearings, I shall not seek to clothe my argument in all the tinseled array of oratory—but rather speak in plain, homely language, as I am anxious to preach not myself, but Christ crucified. As the object of all preachers should be to make their hearers acquainted with the subject from its commencement, I shall commence by leading you back to first principles—not for the sake of the learned, but the unlearned—that they may fully understand the footing or basis upon which the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass is placed, with reference to the bloody sacrifice on the cross on Calvary.

All our own acts are of so insignificant a nature, all we have or possess are in themselves so worthless, that if we offered them to God He would not accept them, there being nothing worthy of His eternal majesty in them; therefore, all our salutations to each other—such as the bowing to superiors, or to the Queen—are all works that are admissible, because they do not interfere with the worship due and acceptable to God.

The only thing acceptable to God is a pure sacrifice, which was offered externally and openly to God, so that it would be entirely distinguished from any salutation or offering made to man, no matter how high his rank or dignity. Leviticus declares that the man who made a sacrifice to anything but to God, was guilty of idolatry, and should be cut off from the midst of the people.

I would wish you to know that, at all times, and in all ages, all nations—whether black or white people inhabited them—all paid reverence to some superior being or another. This fact is incontrovertibly the truth; so that it would appear that God had stamped it upon the minds of all mankind that sacrifice should be offered to Him. We find that, long before God revealed His will to Adam, Cain and Abel offered sacrifice to God—nay, we find Isaac, Jacob, and Moses himself, offering sacrifice, before they knew the real wishes of God upon the subject—that is, as to what sort of sacrifice He would accept.

I have been asked, in a letter, signed "A Catholic" (but which, from the ignorance displayed, could never have come from a Catholic), whether there were any faithful at the time of the flood, except Noah?—and, also, if there were any priests or bishops then to offer sacrifice for the people? If the writer took the trouble of looking into the sacred writings, he would see that the ordination of bishops were of Christ's own ordering, according to the new law, and that, therefore, there were no bishops at all in the old law. The father of every family offered sacrifice for himself and his household; but not having offered the sort of sacrifice God had ordered—or having offered it in another manner than that in which God had ordered it should be offered—God would not receive any sacrifice from them. When man was left to his mere nature, God took from him whatever sacrifice he saw fit to offer; but when He was graciously pleased to reveal Himself, then He would not receive any sacrifice but the one He had ordered, and that, too, should be offered in the exact manner in which He had directed it.

We find in the old law, called Leviticus, no less than four kinds of sacrifices ordained by God. The first was a holocaust, which was to be burned entirely; this sacrifice was the prefiguration of the glorious, though bloody sacrifice on the cross of Calvary—for there it was that Christ offered Himself to His heavenly Father for the sins of mankind, whole and entire, taking upon Himself all our sins, though incapable of committing a single sin Himself. The next was a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; it was not offered in the same manner of the holocaust, the priest and the persons who offered it being suffered to partake of it after it was offered to God. Then there was the sin offering, which the priest was to offer for the sins of the people; and as it was an offering for sin, no person guilty of sin could touch it—therefore, the priest alone, for the time, being the representative of God, was suffered to partake of it. The fourth was a peace offering, of which both priest and people were suffered to partake. St. Paul states that these offerings were nothing in themselves; but inasmuch as they shadowed forth the offering of Christ Himself, and could not be of the smallest use to any person but those who looked upon them as the types and figures of the promised Messiah.

The holocaust was the type of Christ's bloody and entire offering upon the cross; the sin offering was a type of His entire offering of Himself for the sins of the people. The other two offerings, not of the flesh or blood of animals at all, were typical of the unbloody sacrifice of the Last Supper, which is the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Leviticus, 2d chap., 1st v., "And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense theron." 2d v., "And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord." 3d v., "And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire." 4th v., "And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes, of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil." 5th v., "And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil." 6th v., "Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat offering."

Here you see that there were two sacrifices bloody and two unbloody; I will ask what did these unbloody sacrifices typify? Surely it was not the bloody sacrifice of the cross, on which Christ's body and blood were offered. No, but they were types of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, instituted at the Last Supper; where He said, taking bread in His hands, "This is my body." If there was nothing but bread and wine in the Sacrifice of the Mass, surely the type would be equal to it—the prefiguration as good as the thing prefigured. But if you allow that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, then you will at once admit that the sacrifice of the new law is infinitely superior to the sacrifice of the old law, by which it was prefigured.

In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, we find that when Abraham was returning from the pursuit of the four kings, bearing with him the spoils of the five kings whom they had plundered, and the people whom they were carrying away prisoners; the king of Sodom went out to meet him, and in the eighteenth verse we find, "And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: for he was the priest of the most high God." 19th v., "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." Now mark the words, "brought forth bread and wine," means brought forth to sacrifice, for by this only could he have proved his priesthood. Any man might have blessed Abram; but it was a priest only that could offer the sacrifice. But in the Protestant Bible they place the word "and" instead of "for," and thus make it read, "and he was a priest of the most high God,"—instead of "for he was a priest of the most high God." He brought forth the bread and wine first, and blessed him afterwards; clearly showing that he first offered the sacrifice, and then gave Abram the blessing.

Protestants say that he merely brought forth the bread and wine to refresh Abram and his men; but this could not be the case, because they had all the spoils of the five kings with them, and, therefore, did not want bread and wine from Melchizedek. I ask, did Melchizedek ever show one sign of his priesthood until that day? He never did. I shall go on, however, until I convince all that Melchizedek was a priest, and that his ministry was from heaven, and that Jesus Christ Himself took His order from him. St. Paul says Christ was a high-priest, forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. What instituted the order of Aaron's priesthood, and prevented any man upon pain of death from offering sacrifice except Aaron and his sons? Why did not Christ take His priesthood according to Aaron, instead of according to Melchizedek? But St. Paul said, "that as the order of priesthood was changed, so also was the sacrifice." At the Last Supper, our Lord and Saviour instituted a new sacrifice, under the figure of bread and wine; and, being a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, He offered up that sacrifice, which was no less than His own flesh and blood—He being eternal and infinite, is to this day offering up the same sacrifice for us; showing clearly that the priesthood of Melchizedek was to supersede that of Aaron—the sacrifice being changed from a bloody to a clean oblation.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, 10th chap., 4th v., "For it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sins should be taken away. (5th v.), Therefore, coming into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me. (6th v.), Holocausts for sin did not please thee. (7th v.), Then said I, Behold, I come: in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will, O Lord."

Now, we find that none of the sacrifices which the priests of the old law offered, pleased God; and Christ having come to institute a new sacrifice for the remission of sin, and also to bring man to his Creator by repentance—instituted at His Last Supper a clean oblation of bread and wine, so that the bloody sacrifice of His body might be no longer necessary; yet He suffered Himself to be crucified, because it was the type which the sacrifices of Aaron's priesthood had been so long prefiguring. But, because that sacrifice was attended with pain and suffering, He no longer required it to be offered, having fulfilled the law.

It being necessary for every person to work out his salvation by faith and good works, Christ has left us His body and blood, that, by feeding upon it, we may gain sufficient strength to be able to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Christ did not die that He might give a loose reign to the evil propensities of our nature, so that man might be saved by merely believing in Him. He came for a far different purpose—He came to open the way to eternal life which was closed against man, and to reconcile him to his offended Maker. This was the object of Christ's mission; and if any man thinks that the blood of Christ, being shed for sinners, is sufficient to save him, without any co-operation on his own part, he will be miserably mistaken. Christ died for mankind, and, in the excess of His love, left behind Him a sacrifice, which could be daily offered to His heavenly Father for the remission of sins. God would not receive any sacrifice from man until Christ came and offered His own body upon the cross, which was acceptable to His heavenly Father; and then, lest we should fail in obtaining His favor forever, He left us the same identical sacrifice, under the mystery of the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. In that holy sacrament He leaves His body and blood to be banqueted upon—he leaves us a banquet which angels dare not touch—so full of His grace and love, and so identical with the sacrifice offered upon Calvary, that if we participate worthily, we are just as well off as if we were by at the tree of Calvary, when He yielded up His spirit to His heavenly Father.

You will see, my beloved brethren, that Christ could not have been a priest according to Melchizedek, forever, if He was never to offer the oblation but the once; He being infinite, and all His works infinite, having once offered His body and blood for the sins of man, He must be always offering the same sacrifice. You may ask, if Christ is always offering sacrifice for us, is not that all that is necessary? No, that never was the object of Christ's coming: for He says Himself, "He that would enter into eternal life must keep my commandments"; so that He clearly shows His mission was to open the way to the holy of holies, and to leave behind Him shepherds that would guide the flock in the way of eternal life.

St. Paul says, "He that eats of this bread, or drinks of this wine, not discerning the body of the Lord; eats and drinks his own damnation." Every one that eats or drinks this sacrament unworthily, crucifies to himself anew the Son of God. We can crucify Christ every time we give scandal to any one of His little ones. St. John, in his Book of Revelations, states, "that he saw a lamb standing before the throne of God, as it were slain"; showing that though Christ was seated upon the throne beside the Father, yet He was standing like a slain lamb, making intercession with the heavenly Father for us. "He was standing as it were slain"—showing that He was offered up to His heavenly Father just in the same manner as He was upon the cross of Calvary; and proving that the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which He is offered up daily to God the Father, is exactly the same as the offering of the "Lamb of God" upon the cross, having the same high-priest and victim—a priest being merely appointed to do the outward or visible act, but who dare not for a moment speak or act as of himself, but merely as the servant of Jesus Christ, who is the high-priest. In the words of consecration, the priest uses the words of Christ, he being the representative; and thus it is Christ who speaks Himself, "This is my body"; showing that it was He who made the change from bread to His own body, and from wine to His own blood.

Were I to go into the various proofs which I could adduce from the new law, of the Sacrifice of the Mass being exactly the same sacrifice offered upon the cross, it would take up five Lectures instead of one. But in the words of the institution, Christ says, "This is my body which is given for you; this is my blood which is shed for you." Do this by my authority, and in remembrance of me—in memorial of my death and passion. He told the Apostles, My body is not yet crucified for you, or my blood is not yet shed for you; but I offer up this to the Father, and He will accept it for you. You are not to do this until I am dead, and then you are to do it. Mind how Christ said, "This is my body which is given for you, and this is my blood which is shed for you"; but He did not say, "This is my body which is given to you," because that would be a sacramental act, instead of a sacrificial one. Daniel said, Every time you do this, you make a memento of the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Malachi, in writing of the change made in the sacrifice, says, "Christ instituted a sacrifice which would be offered up from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof"; showing that it could not be any of the sacrifices of the old law, which were not offered up daily.

Some Protestants may say that this offering was merely a memento or remembrance of the Last Supper. I answer them, by asking them to divest their minds of every feeling save that of arriving at the truth; and then if they place their hands upon their hearts, they will admit that Christ is as really and substantially present upon our altar, as He was really and substantially present at the Last Supper, or upon the cross of Calvary.

If the Protestants think that offering bread and wine is a representation of Christ's Last Supper—how infinitely superior is that belief that makes Him really so! Comparing small with great—if there was a representation of the battle of Waterloo, and that Wellington was present, would not the representation be more complete than if he was only represented? So with the Sacrament of the Eucharist — it is infinitely superior to any memento or representation of the Last Supper, Christ being really and substantially present Himself.

I say it would be a mock representation, if Christ was not really present; but, by His being present, and offering Himself to His heavenly Father, the sacrifice is complete. How humble, how humiliating, how kind and loving, of the Redeemer, to come and suffer Himself to be offered upon our altars— often for an unworthy congregation, and often by an unworthy minister—but Christ being always the high-priest Himself, the sacrifice must be acceptable to God. If Christ was not really present, and if the bread and wine were not changed into His body and blood, soul and divinity, it would be blasphemy to offer them to God, as it would then be a new offering.

Show me the place, point out the time, tell me the historian, that could say, that in this place the Sacrifice of the Mass was never offered. There is not a town, a village, a hamlet, or a place in the known world (I do not speak of places that have been lately discovered), but I say, show me the place in all the known world where the Sacrifice of the Mass has not been offered from the days of the Apostles down to the time of Luther. There is not one place to point to. We know that for fifteen hundred years it was offered up in every place in the known world. Were they all idolaters? God forbid! We find that they all offered up the Sacrifice of the Mass as the same sacrifice offered by Christ Himself upon the cross, but in an unbloody manner. If you deny the sacrifice of the altar, you proclaim that your forefathers for fifteen hundred years were idolaters: and, consequently, were damned. All the Protestants do not believe this; for I could quote nearly as many Protestant bishops who believed in the real presence, as I could quote holy fathers; I have fifteen Protestant bishops who wrote believing in the doctrine of the real presence, and thirty-four testimonies of the holy fathers, all of which I intended to read, if time permitted, but I shall pass them over and go on to some proofs from the Sacred Scriptures.

Daniel, 9th chap., 27th v., "And in the middle of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to fail; and there shall be in the temple abomination and desolation." Now this means, that at the end of the world Antichrist will have persecuted the true Church so much, that for half a year the sacrifice would not be offered in the temple, like as it was here in the time of Elizabeth. Now, I may be asked what sacrifice did Daniel allude to? and I answer it from the 24th chap., 3d v., of Matthew: "And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" 15th v., "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (Whoso readeth let him understand)." The greatest sign of His coming was to be the persecution of Antichrist against the Faith; so that the sacrifice should be offered up privately, and not in the church. What sacrifice is this that is spoken of? Protestants say it is the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving—the offering of an humble and contrite heart. This could not be the sacrifice at all, for no power of Antichrist could have the smallest control over the mind—it should be some outward sign or offering; so that it clearly meant the Sacrifice of the Mass. This was the sure sign of the end of the world, when that holy and august sacrifice would be prevented all over the world. What sacrifice do they offer in the Protestant Church which could be suppressed? None whatever; and therefore it could not be the Church of Christ against which Antichrist was to prevail.

I am grieved that I have not time to go more fully into this subject; but I will ask, was not the Sacrifice of the Mass offered during fifteen centuries all over the known world, and even up to this day, now in the nineteenth century? Do not the many splendid edifices which the fury of the Reformation had levelled, bear ample testimony to the zeal and devotion of the early Christians by whom they were erected, all of whom believed in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist? Yes, they must admit, that until the time of Luther and Calvin, the doctrine of the real presence was the only one to be found among classes of professing Christians. I shall not go into the characters of either Luther or Calvin; but I must say that the thirst after truth, now so strongly evinced by all classes of Protestants, shows that they have no confidence in these founders of the church of the Reformation. Protestants are now beginning to see, read, and think for themselves; and the effect of this thinking was best told by fifteen Protestants embracing the Church of Christ in one day in this chapel.

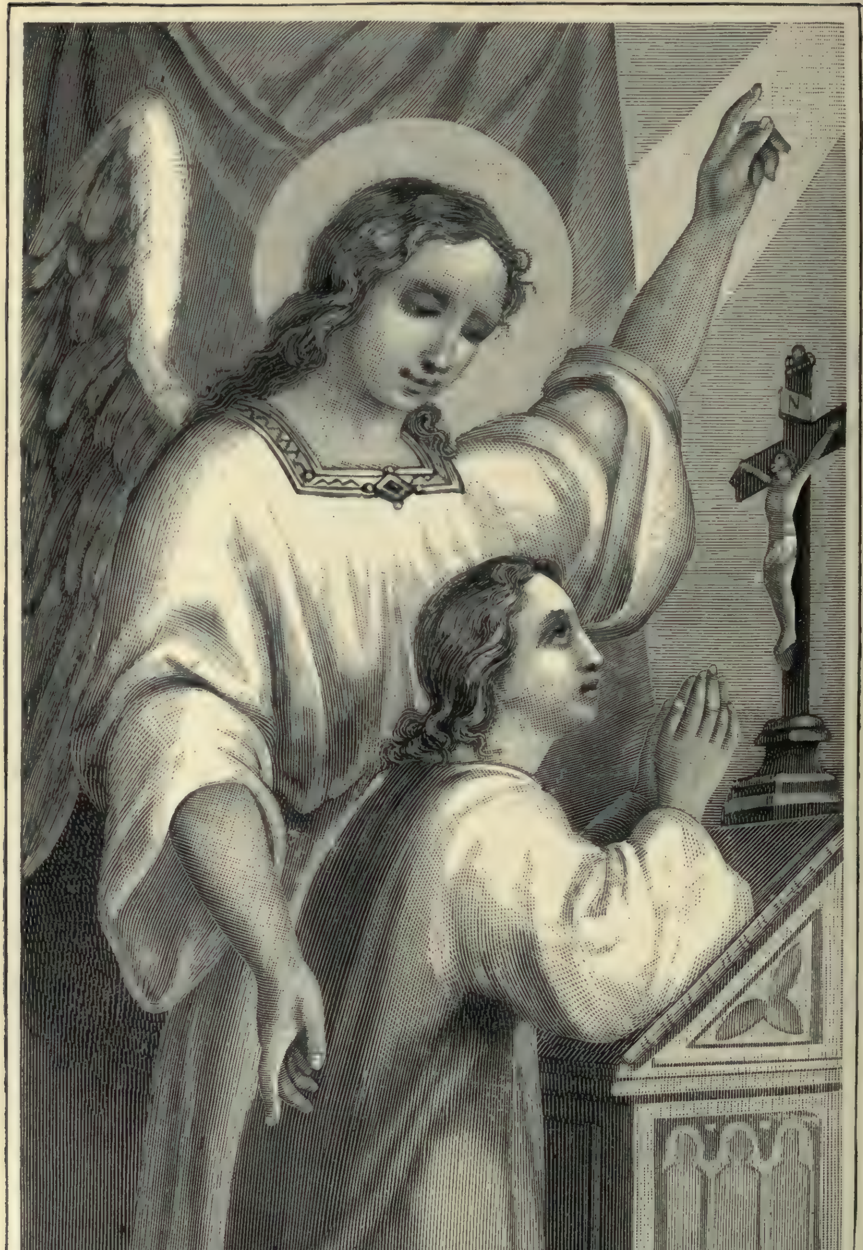
The Rev. gentleman then read a short extract from the introductory portion of a pamphlet to which he had alluded. These are the words:—

"The barrier which stands most prominently to impede the union, or reconciliation, between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, arises from their widely different views on the subject of the Holy Communion; my first ambition, therefore, shall be, to create unanimity on this important sacrament, and as it must be no small matter in our favor to have apostolic authority upon this momentous point, wherein Christ's mystical body has too long resembled a house divided against itself, I now do select the materials wherewith to found the basis of Catholic unity, from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians: this great apostle of the Gentiles having been more explicit upon the nature and subject of the Holy Communion in this epistle, than any others of the inspired writers, when contributing to the volume of the New Testament. In the chapter succeeding our text, St. Paul, with the design of reforming the abuses which had crept into the Corinthian Church relative to this holy feast, takes occasion to explain its institution, wherein two things are most prominently set forth by him; first, the death of Christ; secondly, the memorial of His death, as expressed in this sacrament. These are his words (1 Cor., 11th chap., verses 23, 24, 25): 'For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.' Thus we have, in the description of this sacrament, plainly set before us by this great apostle, first, the death or sacrifice of Christ; secondly, the Lord's Supper or feast upon this sacrifice; and that it was no other sacrifice, the memorial of which was kept alive by this feast, but that very identical one offered up for the salvation of mankind, wherein Christ, the pure Lamb of God, was both the high-priest and the victim, is manifest and plain from these words of the apostle, which are found in the very next verse which follows the institution of this sacrament. (26), 'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' How awfully sublime and sacred must that sacrifice be which was offered by the Holy Creator Himself! then, certainly, the danger of trifling with the Blessed Sacrament must be proportionably awful; for, as the benefits of worthily receiving are great, so, also, the criminality of accounting the sacrifice of the Son of God as an unholy or light matter, must be immeasurably horrible."

The text chosen by this gentleman is the same which I have chosen, 1 Cor. x. 14.

REVEREND A. A. LAMBING.

Reverend A. A. LAMBING, of St. James' Church, Wilkinsburg, Penn., author of "Plain Sermons on Mixed Marriages," and "Mixed Marriages: Their Origin and their Results," has furnished most interesting reading matter on a very important subject for family consideration.



Let Us Pray Together.

PRACTICAL VIEW OF MIXED MARRIAGES.

"With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart."—JER. xii. 11.

WHEN Moses was about to die, and saw with prophetic eyes how the people of whom he had so long been the leader would fall away from God, he endeavored by the most touching discourses to impress upon their minds the advantages they possessed in being the chosen inheritance of the Most High. Adverting to the beauty and expressiveness of their religious ceremonies, which he had established by the divine command, he exclaimed: "What other nation is there so renowned that hath ceremonies and just judgments, and all the law, which I will set forth this day before your eyes?" (Deut. iv. 8). Man being composed not only of an immortal soul, but also of a body endowed with senses which receive impressions from external objects, the Church has taken advantage of this, and has adopted such ceremonies as are calculated both to signify the graces she imparts, and to prepare the mind and heart to receive them. Witness the ceremonies of marriage and the nuptial Mass. What could be a more fitting commencement of that holy state of life into which the couple then enter? How sadly different, how dead in comparison, are the ceremonies, or rather the absence of all ceremonies, in mixed marriage! Yet, if it is entered into without the expressive rites and celestial blessings of religion, both reason and experience teach that it cannot be expected to continue happily. Hence I shall show you that mixed marriages are condemned and declared unhappy,—

I. By the marriage ceremony of the Church;
II. By reason; and
III. By experience.

I. By the marriage ceremony of the Church.

The Sacred Scripture presents us with a most simple and beautiful marriage ceremony in the union of the young Tobias and Sara. Reguel, "taking the right hand of his daughter, gave it into the right hand of Tobias, saying: The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you, and may He join you together, and fulfil His blessing in you" (Tob. vii. 15). But the New Law being the reality of that of which the Old was but the shadow, the marriage ceremony in it is yet more beautiful and expressive. Let us briefly consider the manner of this union in the Church. After using their own judgment, consulting their parents, and pouring forth fervent and persevering prayer to God that the light of His grace may direct them, a young man and woman agree to marry each other. It is not by stealth they proceed, as if they were ashamed of the Sacrament they are about to receive; they do not regard as unholy the state of life which God Himself has blessed, nor do they make light of the laws and usages of the Church; but being anxious to be united with the blessing of God, they willingly do all in their power to secure it. I am not ignorant that there are Catholics to be found who would willingly set aside the ceremonies and blessing of religion, and imitate those who are separated from the true Church; but I speak of those only who are desirous of receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony "as it is in Christ and in the Church." The banns are proclaimed, and when the day has arrived, having made a good confession, the couple appear in the church accompanied by their parents. The priest, vested as the Ritual prescribes, advances to the altar railing, where the couple present themselves before the altar of God, to be united in His holy presence and under His special protection. The ring, the emblem of their mutual fidelity, is blessed, the adorable Sacrifice of the Altar is celebrated for them, a special benediction is pronounced upon them, they again approach the railing, and having been united to each other, they are now united to Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion. They return to their homes, accompanied not only by their parents and friends, but, like the young Tobias and Sara, by the angel of God. Well may we exclaim with Tertullian: "Who can express the happiness of that marriage which the Church approves, which the Sacrifices of the Mass confirm, and which blessing seals? angels announce it, and the Father ratifies it!"

How different, alas, is the marriage of a Catholic with one who is not of the fold of Christ! It is frequently brought about by stealth, and always contrary to the will of God and His Church, and of good parents. It often takes place without the requisite dispensation, sometimes before a civil magistrate, and occasionally even before an heretical minister, adding sacrilege and excommunication to rebellion. But granting that, with the exception of its being a mixed marriage, the couple wish to conform as far as possible to the requirements of religion, how sad is the ceremony! The banns are not proclaimed, from fear that it might be thought the Church countenanced such a marriage; the ceremony does not take place in the church before the altar of God, for they have disregarded His known will; nor even in the sacristy, for that too is holy ground; no light burns as an emblem of their faith and love, their faith, alas, burns too faintly and their love is sensual; and no sacred vestment is worn by the priest, but he goes to the room where the marriage is to take place as he would go to transact any secular business. He stands before the unhappy couple merely as a witness, for he says no prayer, makes no sign of the cross, sprinkles not a drop of holy water, does nothing, in a word, for he is strictly forbidden, that would savor in the least of religion. What could make a sadder impression on the mind of a child of God? A Christian burial service is more consoling, for there the Church bids adieu to the body of one of her children, and that only for a time; here she too often bids farewell to the soul for all eternity. And happy would it be for many a Catholic if it had been his funeral instead of his wedding day; for then he would have to answer for but one soul, now many souls may rise up in judgment against him.

II. By reason.

Unaided reason also teaches that a union entered into without the blessing of a common religion cannot prove happy. Let us suppose the case, perhaps the most common, in which the wife is the Catholic. She must tread the narrow path that leads to life everlasting, must hear Mass, receive the Sacraments, observe the days of fast and abstinence, pray daily; in a word, she must obey, under the penalty of eternal damnation, laws which she sees daily trodden under foot by him whom she has vowed to love, by him who should be one with herself. Let the husband be ever so well-disposed, he cannot enter into the feelings of his wife; he treads one path, she another; he regards as superstition what she holds dearer than life; he thinks little of eternity, in it she has placed all her hopes. Do what they will, there can be no real union of hearts, no harmony of sentiments, because there is no faith. They remain as before marriage,—not one, but two.

But if the husband is an enemy of our holy faith, if he ridicules it, if he forbids his wife to go to church and practice her other religious duties at home, she will soon be a stranger to all happiness, and may well long for the day when death will set her free from that worse than Egyptian bondage. And when the dread hour of death itself draws near and all human aid and comfort are of no avail, the consolations of religion and the presence of the minister of God may be denied by the heartless husband; and he may add reflections to his refusal that will render it doubly painful. Yet he is her lord, and she has vowed to love him. Oh, that an angel would come down from heaven and warn all who contemplate a mixed marriage of the misery for time and eternity to which they expose themselves. But they have the word of God and His Church; if they will not obey them, neither would they obey the voice of an angel. Where there is such difference of sentiment and such opposition in the all-important affair of religion, there can be no real harmony in matters of minor moment. The Catholic in such a union must necessarily lead an unhappy life, or purchase a trifling temporal happiness by the sacrifice of that which is eternal.

With the Protestant we have nothing to do; yet he cannot be happy. He cannot believe, and think, and feel, and act in harmony with his wife; and where there is no union of hearts the very foundation of all true happiness is wanting and it cannot exist.

But who can picture the evil effects produced in the minds of the children of a mixed marriage? Unfortunate as the case is with the misguided Catholic herself, it is an evil of her own choice. But with the children it is not so. Of what crime were they guilty that they should be condemned by an unnatural parent, even before their birth, to a life of almost certain infidelity, and should have even their eternal salvation endangered by one who was influenced by self-will or sensuality rather than by the fear of God and the love of religion? The contemplation of such an injustice, such an outrage, is enough to make angels weep. Or what shall we say of the inhuman conduct, condemned alike by reason and religion, of those who agree to allow the boys to be raised in the religion of the father and the girls in that of their mother? But, granting that the children are trained as Catholics, their attachment to the faith is not, and cannot in the nature of things, be so firm as if both parents were of the true faith. If both parents are zealous for their respective systems of religion, there must frequently be disedifying contentions and disputes. If either is indifferent, the children must necessarily conclude that religion is, after all, a matter of small importance. If the Protestant favors the Catholic training of the children, they must yet conclude that religion cannot be what he would fain have them believe, else why does not he, a man of mature years and judgment, embrace it himself? If it is not worth his care and attention, why should it be worth theirs? It is utterly impossible that the children of a mixed marriage should adequately value religion and appreciate its obligations; for during the most plastic period of their lives all their associations are of such a character as to prevent these impressions from fixing themselves on their minds.

III. By experience.

It frequently happens that people become excited or permit their judgment to be biased in the discussion of disorders for which they have a strong antipathy, and their language is apt in consequence to be exaggerated. Well would it be for the Church and the world if such were the case in regard to mixed marriages. But it is not so. The conclusions of reason are too amply borne out by the lessons of experience. What is the condition of Catholics married to non-Catholics as we see it in the world around us? Take the most favorable instance, that in which the husband favors the wife as much as possible in the practice of her religion. Not supported by his example, she either goes on without sympathy, or gradually falls away from the fulfilment of her religious duties; and it may safely be said of perhaps the greater number of mixed marriages, that, as the blame was with the Catholic in the beginning, it usually remains with her through life. She is bound by a solemn promise—which was formerly required to be confirmed by an oath upon the holy Gospel—to do all in her power to reclaim her husband from his errors; but instead of doing so, does she not too often rather confirm him in them by neglecting the practice of her own most sacred duties? How many Protestant husbands would, in all human probability, become Catholics if their wives were exemplary! But no; lukewarm at first, such unfortunate Catholics drop every duty imposed by their religion, till in the end they become practical infidels, and we hear nothing of them until the priest is hurriedly sent for, if that last grace is vouchsafed them, to attend them in their dying hour.

But let us go a step further and take the case, by no means uncommon, in which the Protestant husband opposes the wife in the practice of her religion. What can she do? She cannot pray as she would; she cannot hear Mass except rarely and by stealth; she cannot receive her Easter Communion; she cannot assist at those special devotions from which she might draw so much grace and consolation; she cannot have her children publicly baptized; she can do nothing, in a word, to show that she is a Catholic; and if she ventures to do so by stealth, it will only be made the occasion of further persecution. The husband is obliged solemnly to promise before marriage that he will allow his wife perfect liberty in the practice of her religion, and that he will permit all the children born of the marriage to be baptized and raised in the Catholic Church. But will he keep his promises? Experience teaches that he will not, if interest, his own perverse disposition, the influence of Protestant friends, or the commands of secret societies to which he may belong, prompt or require him to break them. Listen to the following incident which to my certain knowledge took place in one of our large cities. A Protestant man and a Catholic woman came to the house of a priest one evening to be married. Both made the solemn promises required of them, the marriage ceremony was performed, and they departed.

But as they walked out arm in arm past the church the man remarked to his wife: "My dear, this is as near a Catholic church as you will be for some time." But it was too late; the knot was tied, and she must henceforth be his slave in soul and body till death, and even in death he may not relent. How many such instances might be found! And it must not be forgotten that the civil law does not recognize the binding force of promises made before marriage; it even declares that the husband cannot bind himself by such a promise.

But what becomes of the children of such a marriage? We have seen that even under the most favorable circumstances they cannot have a firm attachment to their religion. They are commonly but indifferently instructed, they frequently associate with Protestants or infidels, are generally sent to the public schools, read un-Catholic literature, and in the end lose their faith or marry out of the Church. How seldom do the children of a mixed marriage become and continue through life good practical Catholics! How often do we find them without baptism; how often do we see them raised Protestants, and taught to ridicule the religion of their Catholic parent. Well may the words of our Divine Redeemer be applied to mixed marriages: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation" (Luke xi. 17). The statistics of mixed marriages will show the awful responsibility of those who contract such unholy alliances. And if the consequences are so dire for the children when the mother is the Catholic, and can mould their young minds during her hours of intercourse with them in spite of the efforts of the father, what must it be when the mother is the non-Catholic, and can readily undo the good that her husband might try to effect during the short time that he is with them?

But you should also bear in mind that the evil of a mixed marriage does not end with the death of the misguided Catholic. It may go on to the end of time, and souls may be multiplied by hundreds that will never see God, but that will trace their life of infidelity and their eternal estrangement from Him to the disobedience of one and her disregard of the salutary restraints of religion. Before the dread tribunal of her inexorable Judge she will learn, alas! too late, the force of the divine menace: "Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee and thy apostasy shall rebuke thee. Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not with thee" (Jer. ii. 19).

In conclusion, let me urge upon you by every consideration to reflect on the probable consequences of whatever you propose to yourselves before you act. And in the all-important affairs of choosing a partner for life, do not act with precipitation. A step once taken there cannot be retraced. When you are married once you are married for life. The Protestant whom you marry only lends himself to you during his good pleasure, and may seek a divorce when he grows tired of you; and his religious principles teach him to recognize its efficacy. But it is not so with you; you have been taught that marriage is a Sacrament which binds the husband and wife to each other until death. Do not persuade yourself that you can stand amid temptations in which thousands of others have fallen. Remember the awful lesson which the example of King Solomon teaches you. But there is still another consideration. Remember that it is through marriage God has willed that children should be born into the world, and that parents are responsible for the training of their children. If you marry out of the Church you will have to answer to God for the children He may give you, and though it will be hard to answer for your own soul, it will be tenfold harder to answer for theirs. Resolve, then, while you are yet free, not to disregard the will of God, not to violate the laws of the Church, not to act contrary to the dictates of reason and the lessons of experience, and not to destroy your own happiness here and endanger your salvation for eternity by a mixed marriage. On the contrary, in this, as in all else, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice" (Matt. vi. 33). Amen.

THE DUTIES OF YOUNG PERSONS IN RELATION TO MIXED MARRIAGES.

"It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."—LAM. iii. 27.

OUR Divine Redeemer, in order to warn His followers against undue anxiety in seeking the things of this world, and prevent them from forgetting their last end even while procuring the necessaries of life, gave them this brief but adequate rule for their guidance: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). Now, if a God of infinite wisdom deemed it expedient to warn His followers against those things "which the heathens seek," in matters that were necessary for their subsistence, much more should His words be the guide for Christians in the choice of a partner for life, where passion or caprice is too apt to bias and control the judgment.

In the previous discourse we considered the evil of mixed marriages and some of the sources from which they take their rise. The necessity of discovering a remedy and applying it must be patent to every one who has the honor and glory of God, the prosperity of the Church, the happiness of the Christian family, and the salvation of souls at heart. But since God has both endowed us with reason and supplied us with supernatural grace, it becomes our duty to use both the one and the other in doing good and avoiding evil. In the present discourse I shall point out to you some of the most powerful means by which young persons may be preserved by the use of these gifts from a mixed marriage, that fatal step which draws so many evil consequences after it. And first among these must be reckoned,—

I. Respect for the authority of the Church and obedience to her laws.

It is the privilege of every human society or organization to make laws for the government of its members, and to require the observance of them by all who wish to partake of its benefits; and those who do not wish to obey the laws are at liberty to withdraw and enjoy their freedom. But it is not so with the Church. It is not a human organization. Our Divine Redeemer in commissioning His Apostles to preach the Gospel and to spread the Church throughout the world, not only gave them power and authority to make laws for the government of His mystic body, but also assured them that from His high throne of glory in heaven He would sanction their legislation. To the Prince of Apostles He said: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). All the laws of the Church impose a strict obligation binding in conscience upon all Christians to whom they are applicable. The Catholic cannot with impunity disregard the laws of the Church, nor despise the authority of Him who enacts them; for, "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (Matt. xvi. 17), and "he that heareth you," says Christ to the teaching Church, "heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke x. 17). Nor is the Catholic permitted to withdraw from the Church as he might from a human organization; for he is commanded under penalty of eternal damnation to serve God faithfully, and it is only as a loyal member of the Church that he is enabled to fulfil that divine command.

Were you, Christian youth, but filled with due respect for the laws of our holy mother the Church, and disposed to sacrifice everything rather than violate her sacred precepts; were you imbued with the real Catholic spirit, which made the saints not only obedient to the Church, but also enthusiastic in all that related to her well-being, who rejoiced in her triumphs and wept at her reverses, what a powerful remedy would be applied to the evil of mixed marriages! Accustomed to think and act as Catholics, to regard all things from God's point of view, to look upon the Sacrament of Matrimony "as it is in Christ and in the Church," you would never permit yourselves to be entangled in friendship that could in any way lead you to offend God, to violate the laws or disregard the wishes of His Church, or to endanger your eternal salvation or the salvation of others yet unborn, by contracting a mixed marriage.

II. The frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist.

But while the laws of the Church impose obligations upon her children, the Sacraments supply them with grace to enable them to fulfil those obligations. The prophecy of Isaias is here fulfilled: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains" (Is. xii. 3). How admirably the Sacrament of Penance is calculated not only to free the penitent soul from the guilt of sin and impart the grace necessary to resist future temptations, but also to teach man to know himself, to know his passions and evil inclinations, the strong and the weak points in his character and the occasions of his sins, the danger he may be in of contracting sinful habits or dangerous intimacies, and all that may be useful to him to avoid sin and practice virtue. There is no teacher like a good conscience when carefully examined. The instruction and advice a young person receives in the sacred tribunal add to all this the wisdom of a learned and experienced director. Guided by these, if you submit with docility, it will be impossible for you to wander far from the path of virtue, much less to associate yourself in the intimate relationship of marriage with one not of the fold of Christ.

By means of the Holy Communion you are intimately united to Jesus Christ, the supernatural life of grace is preserved in your soul, your thoughts and desires are elevated and purified, your good resolutions receive new strength, and you are removed further and further from the danger of any false or perilous step in life. To those who receive the Sacraments frequently and worthily so hateful a deformity as a mixed marriage is morally impossible; for they live in Christ, and He in them.

III. Avoid all intimate association, especially company-keeping, with non-Catholics.

While those who receive the Sacraments frequently and worthily are strengthened in their union with God and their resolution to sacrifice everything rather than forfeit His friendship, those who withdraw themselves from these fountains of grace and strength, find their passions and evil inclinations daily growing stronger and becoming more imperious. The spirit of evil, who, "as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. v. 8), and who never loses an opportunity of laboring for the ruin of souls, frequently leads those who are weak into intimate association with persons not of the true Church, and in the end induces them to keep company, which is rarely free from danger, even among good people, and which in their case sometimes leads to dishonor and often to a mixed marriage and all the evils which it entails.

Young persons should be equally on their guard against judging by appearances. The young man who dresses most fashionably, and who most willingly spends his money in taking young ladies to balls, picnics, and other places of amusement, will not for that reason make the best husband. On the contrary he shows rather a disposition to spend life in idleness and the pursuit of pleasure than in useful labor or devotion to the duties of an honorable profession. Judge a young man by his careful performance of the duties of religion and his state of life, his industry, his self-respect, his economy, his love of his parents, his avoiding evil associations, drinking and gambling; in a word, learn to esteem him for what will make him a useful man, not what will make him an ornamental fop.

And you, young men, learn to judge young ladies in the same manner. Remember that, as the Scriptures teach: "Houses and riches are given by parents; but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord" (Prov. xix. 14). It is necessary for you to think seriously before taking the irrevocable step of entering into the married state. Value persons by those qualities of soul, mind, and body which make them really worth having; for there are many in our day that are not worth having. The one who lives idly at home, or who spends all her earnings in striving to keep up with the fashions, who is most willing to help you spend your money in amusements, who will neglect her religious duties for the sake of a ball, a picnic, or an excursion, who is wanting in self-respect, who disregards the authority of her parents,—and this is a very important point,—who is remiss in approaching the Sacraments, who is coquettish, and loves the praise of the giddy throng rather than the approval of a good conscience, will not make a fit wife for a sensible Christian. Nor should you be too much influenced by the attractions of personal beauty. Nothing is more fleeting, and it is never an evidence of a good heart or a sensible mind. Remember the words of the Holy Spirit: "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Prov. xxi. 30).

Be also on your guard against being allured and ensnared by those advantages which many Protestants seem to possess over Catholics from a worldly point of view. Let the good pleasure of God be your guide in all things, but especially in the choice of a partner for life; and do not forget the advice of the elder Tobias to his son: "Bless the Lord at all times; and desire of Him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in Him" (Tob. iv. 50). Do not forget that in forming intimacies the passions are strong and the will is weak, and a step once taken in marriage cannot be retraced. Beware then of forming friendships that may ripen in time into a mixed marriage, and involve you in a life of misery and an eternity of woe. There is nothing I would urge upon you more strongly when contemplating a change of life than this.

IV. Serious reflection.

The Prophet Jeremias, lamenting the evils that had come upon the city of Jerusalem on account of the sins of the people, and recognizing the true cause of them, cried out: "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart" (Jer. xii. 11). Almighty God has endowed man with reason that he might act, not like inanimate nature from a law of necessity, nor like irrational animals from instinct, but that by reflection he might propose to himself ends worthy of a child of God, and might pursue them in such a manner as to please Him whose will is the supreme law, and thus secure his present and future happiness. And experience teaches that men who are not wholly the slaves of passion employ their reason even in the most trivial affairs of life; and no greater reproach can be made a man than that he acts without reason or contrary to it. If this be true, and no one will deny it, should not you, young men and young women, reflect seriously and employ that noble faculty to the limit of its power in the important affair of choosing a companion for life? You are not selecting a partner to enter into business, where the partnership may be dissolved if it does not prove lucrative or agreeable; you are not taking a person into the family, who may be discharged if he does not give satisfaction; you are not even entering into a religious order, where there is a long period of probation in which you could learn whether you were suited for the order or the order for you, and in which you would have the aid and advice of a judicious superior. In the selection of a partner for life all is different. There is no time for probation, and if persons who contemplate marriage associate together in company-keeping it is only to conceal the disagreeable traits of their characters, it is only to deceive; they study not to appear what they are, but what they are not. Yet the union of husband and wife is more intimate than any other upon earth, for Christ Himself declares, "they are not two, but one flesh" (Matt. xix. 6). Not only so, but their bond of union is for life, and no power but death can dissolve it; for the same Christ says in the same place: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Should not the most serious reflection precede and direct so important, so irrevocable a choice? And if any incompatibility of temperament or disposition were discovered, would not the same reflection show how imprudent it would be for such persons to unite themselves together for life?

But it is not only for the happiness and well-being of themselves that persons contemplating marriage must consult; they should also remember that the rearing of a family is the main object of that holy state, and that their own happiness must be intimately connected with that of their children. If they are of such contrary dispositions as are likely to cause them to disagree on any important point, it will be impossible for them to live in peace and harmony together, and train up their children to useful and honorable lives. And if this may and frequently does occur where both are of the same faith, does not reason teach us that it must be a necessary consequence where the husband and wife differ essentially on what all thinking minds must regard as the most important affair that could engage man's attention? Hence it follows that serious reflection on things that are purely temporal must prevent mixed marriages; how much more must meditation on the great eternal truths of religion prevent them? We have then another and most powerful preventative of mixed marriages in,—

V. Meditation on the four last things.

The Holy Spirit says in the Sacred Scripture: "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Eccles. vii. 40). We are not the creatures of to-day. Our life upon earth is indeed aptly compared to a shadow that passes and is seen no more; but that is the life of the body; the soul never tastes death. It passes indeed from this world at a moment hidden from its knowledge, and goes before God, for "it is appointed unto all men once to die" (Heb. ix. 27); but it is immortal, and in the world to come will be rewarded or punished as it has done good or evil in this life, for "God will render to every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). To the Christian who firmly believes, how awful are the words, death, judgment, heaven, hell! To die, to leave the world and all we value in it, to bid it an eternal farewell, and that at a moment of which we know nothing, and go before God with all the good and evil deeds of this life upon us,—what reflection could be better calculated to fill us with fear and dread? Terrible as is this thought, it is but the prelude to one, if it were possible, infinitely more terrible, for the Apostle adds: "And after this, the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Yes, "we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil" (2 Cor. v. 10). We must all go, perhaps without a moment's warning, for Christ has expressly declared: "I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come to thee" (Apoc. iii. 3). And the examination to which the soul will be subjected under the all-searching eye of God will be such that the most trivial fault will not pass unnoticed, because "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgment" (Matt. xii. 36). So much have many of the saints dreaded this final scrutiny that, after a long life spent in the practice of the most exalted virtue, they trembled at the thought of appearing before God. King David cried out in holy fear: "In Thy sight no man living shall be justified" (Ps. cxlii. 2). And St. Paul, although rapt up to the third heaven, and assured by a special revelation that an eternal crown of glory was laid up for him, dreaded the account he would have to give of his life, and said: "I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet I am not thereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. iv. 4).

But however well the thought of appearing in the presence of an omniscient Judge is calculated to fill us with fear, the sentence which follows is of far greater consequence. Our Divine Redeemer Himself has been pleased to tell us what the sentence of the good will be, and what that of the wicked. To the good He tells us He will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then turning to the wicked, in His anger He will drive them from Him with His malediction for all eternity with the words: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 34 and 41). How infinitely dissimilar are these sentences! Yet one of them will be pronounced upon every one of you. Which will it be? Will God welcome you into the realms of eternal bliss, or will He condemn you forever to the fiery prison of hell? Whatever your sentence will be, it will be eternal and irrevocable. Oh, my young Christians, what a reflection! Who that meditates seriously on these eternal truths could endanger his salvation: who place a barrier between himself and heaven? And who, above all, could unite himself to an enemy of God, a slave of Satan, in the intimate union which marriage implies? Who could place his own salvation in jeopardy, and consent to become the parent of others who would probably never see God? Well may we cry out in the words of Moses to the Jews: "Oh, that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end" (Deut. xxxii. 29). No, a mixed marriage is impossible to one who seriously reflects on eternity.

I have endeavored to place before your minds some of the most weighty considerations that should withhold you from contracting a mixed marriage. Respect the authority of the Church and obey her laws. "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them; for they watch as being to render an account of your souls" (Heb. xii. 17). Receive the Sacraments frequently, for by that means you will not only be strengthened to walk in the way of God's commandments, but you will also imbibe the true Catholic spirit. Avoid too intimate an association with those not of the fold of Christ, and especially company-keeping with them, and the enemy of your souls will not be able to ensnare you. Reflect seriously on the nature of marriage and the conditions necessary to insure true and lasting happiness in it. But, above all, think on eternity. The present life is short, but eternity is without end. In a few years we shall all have passed from the busy scenes of earth, we shall all have appeared before God, and shall have received our final sentence either of eternal happiness or of endless misery. Let us then be truly wise and engrave indelibly on our minds the dread words—death, judgment, heaven, hell, and in all our works let us remember our last end, and we shall never sin. Amen.

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS IN RELATION TO MIXED MARRIAGES.

"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, saying: Take not a wife of the stock of Chanaan."—GEN. xxviii. 1.

ST. PAUL, in writing to the Romans and enumerating the principal points of the divine law for their instruction, concludes with the words: "And if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Rom. xiii. 9). Upon no precept of the divine law does our Saviour so strongly insist as upon that of fraternal charity. He has even made it the distinctive characteristic of His followers. "By this," He tells them, "shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John xiii. 35). But although He has enjoined this precept so strictly, and has commanded children not only to love, but, much more, to *honor* their parents, He has not explicitly commanded parents to love their children. Nor need we wonder at this, for the law of nature has stamped affection for children so deeply on the hearts of parents that it is impossible for them not to love them. Even in the animal creation the love of offspring is the strongest passion. But while parents cannot help loving their children, their love may not be, and indeed in many cases is not, properly directed. They love, but not always in and for God. Some permit the temporal well-being of their children to engross their whole attention, while others are too indifferent. Some, again, have a good intention, but do not sufficiently realize that their children are the gift of God, and are merely lent to them, as it were, to be trained for His heavenly kingdom. It is not enough for parents to do well, their efforts must also be directed to a proper end. Should they make a mistake, it is frequently too late when discovered for them to correct it, or to ward off the evil consequences of it. This is especially true of those affections which sometimes spring up between Catholics and non-Catholics, and which too often ripen into mixed marriages. Hence the importance of parents paying the greatest attention to this, and adopting such measures in time as will effectually prevent the evil of a mixed marriage in their families. To aid you in this good work I shall speak to you to-day on the duties of parents in relation to mixed marriages. The principal of these are,—

I. To have a correct idea of the holiness of the marriage state, and to impress it deeply on the minds of your children;

II. Never to prefer their temporal to their spiritual welfare;

III. To instruct them early, and ground them deeply in their religion;

IV. To guard them prudently and vigilantly against contracting too intimate an acquaintance with non-Catholics; and,

V. To pray God earnestly and perseveringly to guard them against the evil of a mixed marriage.

I. To have a correct idea of the holiness of the marriage state, and to impress it deeply on the minds of your children.

No subject has engaged a larger share of the solicitude of the Church than the Sacrament of Matrimony, because in nothing else are the passions so likely to usurp the place of reason and religion in the direction of young persons. Scarcely does a Council meet, scarcely does a bishop issue a pastoral letter, but some disciplinary question relating to Matrimony enters into it. Advice is given, warnings are uttered, or abuses are sought to be corrected. And why? Because, on the one hand, the young have not been sufficiently trained to control their passions and subject them to the dictates of reason and religion; and, on the other, they have not been taught to entertain a correct idea of the sanctity of Christian marriage. While nothing could be further from the mind of the Church than to give the young an acquaintance with what a certain class of licentious and unprincipled writers would seek to teach them, and which would only tend to frustrate the lawful ends of matrimony and make it a means of gratifying the sensual appetite with impunity; nothing on the contrary could be further from her intention than to see young persons rush blindly into that holy state without a knowledge of its sanctity, the obligations it imposes, and the graces with which it is enriched. You are strictly bound, I need not tell you, as Christian parents, to conceal from your children much that relates to your state of life; but at the same time there is much that prudence and a sense of duty requires you to acquaint them with, although not until they are approaching the age of maturity (Titus ii. 4, 5). Your conduct should at all times be a lesson impressing upon their minds your sense of the holiness of your state of life, the mutual harmony and forbearance that should exist between the husband and wife, and the example they should be to each other in self-control, in charity, and in the exact performance of the duties of religion and their state of life. The silent example of Christian parents is the most salutary lesson they can impart to their children; and when they feel it a duty to admonish them, as they will from time to time, their words will carry a weight with them that will have its effect. Let them engrave on the minds of their children the words of the archangel Raphael to the young Tobias: "They who in such a manner received matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power" (Tob. vi. 17). A second duty is,—

II. Never to prefer their temporal to their spiritual welfare.

We are frequently pained, in reading the lives of the saints, at seeing the persistence with which their misguided parents so often oppose them in their wish to consecrate themselves entirely to God. How much had not these poor children to endure; how long and severe their struggle! In many cases it was not until God Himself interposed by a special judgment that the blindness and obstinacy of the parents were at length overcome. How short-sighted are those parents who prefer to see their child wedded to a sinful man—perhaps a Protestant or an infidel—rather than consecrated to the All-holy God; yet we have the same blindness daily before our eyes, although in a different form. You, Christian parents, are not strangers to it; perhaps some of you are among the guilty. It is natural for parents to study to promote the temporal welfare of their children; it is also natural for them to wish to see them well matched, as the phrase has it; but the true Christian must be guided by the principles of religion, and not by those of interest or worldly wisdom. You should seriously ponder the words of our Divine Redeemer: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26). How many parents prepare the way for mixed marriages by sending their children to the infidel schools, because they are thought to be more respectable in the opinion of worldlings! How many permit their daughters to associate with those who are not of the faith, because they are regarded as more wealthy or fashionable! How many not only allow, but even encourage their children to marry those who are not of the fold of Christ, because they imagine that by that means the wealth and standing of their families will be enhanced in the eyes of the world! Woe to such parents, who prefer the gifts of Mammon to the gifts of God, and who trifle with the faith, the happiness, and the eternal salvation of their children for the sake of filthy lucre. What will they be able to answer an angry God when He calls them to account for bartering those saving truths, which He sent His Divine Son on earth to deliver and establish at the price of His sacred blood and cruel death, for wealth, which they can hope to possess at most for a few years, or for so-called respectability, which is based on the sin of Lucifer? The true faith is the legacy which Jesus Christ has left to the world; it is the pearl of great price for which the martyrs willingly exchanged life itself in the midst of the most cruel torments; for which millions of generous souls have voluntarily sacrificed all things; with which nothing on earth can be brought into comparison. If you endanger that, you are guilty of a grievous sin and an unpardonable folly; if you lose it, you lose all for time and eternity. Let this be your rule, Christian parents, never to prefer the temporal to the spiritual welfare of your children; and never to endanger their faith for any human consideration. Remember that your conduct will not influence them only, but through them will influence their children for generations. Do not then, I entreat you, call down the malediction of heaven upon your ashes for untold years in their silent rest. Never forget the words of our Divine Redeemer, so replete with heavenly wisdom: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26). But there are other considerations which parents who are really alive to the true interests of their children, will not fail to make use of, among which one of the most powerful is,—

III. To instruct their children early and ground them deeply and firmly in their religion.

Of all the means of preventing mixed marriages there is none more effectual than this of instructing the young in the knowledge and practice of their religion from their tender years, so that it will grow up with them and become, as it were, a second nature, according to the words of the Holy Spirit: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). The years of childhood are those in which the deepest and most lasting impressions are made; and, in the language of Sacred Scripture: "It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth" (Lam. iii. 27). And when the teaching of parents is confirmed by the silent force of their good example, it is seldom that a son or daughter disregards them in any important matter at any period in life. Instruction and example are guardian angels, as it were, attending them from the cradle to the grave. If, then, you want your children to grow up firm in their attachment to the Church, and free from the danger of contracting marriage with non-Catholics, let it be your constant study to instruct them in their religion and to accustom them to strict discipline. Remember the words of the wise man: "Hast thou children? instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood" (Eccles. vii. 25). But owing to the temptations by which they are surrounded when they are out of your sight, you must not fail to make use of such other natural and supernatural means as are calculated to avert the dread evil of a mixed marriage. Hence another important duty is,—

IV. To guard them prudently and vigilantly against forming too intimate an acquaintance with non-Catholics.

Our Divine Redeemer, in sending His Apostles to teach all nations, said to them: "You are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hateth you" (John xv. 19); and never did this antagonism between the children of God and the children of the world assume a more dangerous or insidious form than at the present time. While the children of God are laboring to preserve their attachment to the truth, those of the world are receding further from its light, and are burying themselves more and more hopelessly in the darkness of error and unbelief. As of old with the wise of this world, so it is at present. "They became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. i. 21, 22). But as the curiosity of Eve made her the victim of the wiles of the serpent, so does the curiosity and waywardness of many young persons in our days expose them to the same danger. And what adds to their peril is the little regard too many of them have for parental and ecclesiastical authority, and the confidence they have in their own wisdom.

Hence a most important duty devolves upon parents of keeping a vigilant watch over them, lest they make a false or dangerous step that cannot be retraced. "The Father," says the Holy Spirit, "waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care of her taketh away his sleep when she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age" (Eccles. xlii. 9). And happy are the parents who have watched successfully! How many, alas, in this degenerate age are forced to cry out with the Eternal Father: "I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me" (Isaias i. 2). What could be more painful or humiliating to parents than to see a son or daughter who has attained the age of maturity despise their authority and that of the Church, marry a non-Catholic, and become the parent of children that may not be trained up in the true faith?

Yet parents themselves are not always free from blame. They sometimes know their son or daughter is contracting an intimacy with a non-Catholic, yet they do not raise a warning voice until it is too late. Perhaps they feel themselves flattered by the attention a rich or well-dressed Protestant is paying their daughter; or they imagine there is time enough, and that they can arrest the evil whenever they see fit. But they discover their mistake when it is too late, and lament their inability to avert a misfortune which if taken sooner might easily have been prevented. Beware then, Christian parents, of permitting such intimacies, and on no account encourage them, no matter what the temporal advantages may seem to be. Nothing can compensate for the risk of your children's faith. But "Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it" (Ps. cxxvi. 1); hence it is incumbent on parents as an imperative duty,—

V. To pray God earnestly and perseveringly to guard their children against the evil of a mixed marriage.

When we consider the unlimited power and efficacy which our Divine Saviour has been pleased to promise infallibly to the prayers that are offered with the proper disposition to His Eternal Father in His name, it is surprising and painful to witness the indifference of so many Christians in regard to it. But for no person is prayer more necessary than for parents; for while others have to care for the salvation of their own souls only, parents have to labor also for the salvation of their children. Learn then, Christian parents, to have recourse to God by frequent, fervent, and persevering prayer that He may dispose the hearts of your children to receive and profit by instruction, and that He may direct them in the important matter of choosing a partner for life. And as they approach the period in life when the thought of making such a choice naturally engages their attention, let your prayer be redoubled that an affair in which the honor and glory of God are so deeply concerned, but in which the passions are so likely to intrude, may be directed by His holy grace. Never advise your children without first praying that your advice may be according to the will of God and may be accompanied by His benediction; and if you see any danger of a false step on the part of any of them, oh, then let your prayers be offered with all possible earnestness. Pour out your soul before God night and day with our Divine Redeemer: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given me" (John xvii. 11). God loves to be importuned, and He frequently gives in a moment what for a long time He denied. Beseech the guardian angels and patron saints of your children to watch over them with special care, and do not forget to have recourse to Mary and Joseph, whom God so miraculously directed in the choice of each other, that the prayers of those who were united in the holiest bond may guide your children in their choice and sanctify them in the union into which they are about to enter.

You are now aware, Christian parents, of the important part which God and His Church expect you to play in preventing the dread evil of mixed marriages. You have learned some of the means by which they may be averted; study to employ them. Instil into the minds of your children by word and example the sanctity of the married life, and the dispositions with which they should enter into it. But in your solicitude for their welfare never prefer their temporal to their spiritual advancement, rather be mindful of the words of Christ: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). Instruct them early and ground them deeply in the knowledge of their religion. Guard them vigilantly and prudently against the many temptations by which they are surrounded in the matter of choosing a partner for life, and pray God earnestly and perseveringly that His blessing may sanctify and seal your efforts. If you sedulously perform your part as good Christian parents, you will have the consolation of seeing your children the parents of good Catholic families, and in the world to come your glory will be increased by the society of those whom you so carefully trained up for the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

THE DUTIES OF CATHOLICS MARRIED TO NON-CATHOLICS.

"We have not hearkened to Thy commandments, nor have we observed nor done as Thou hast commanded us, that it might go well with us."—DAN. iii. 30.

THESE words are taken from the prayer which the three holy youths of the Jewish captivity offered to God from the midst of the fiery furnace into which they were cast by command of King Nabuchodonosor for refusing to worship the golden statue that he had erected at Babylon. The prophets of God had foretold centuries before the evils that would befall the chosen people if they would refuse to obey the laws which had been divinely imposed upon them. But with that waywardness which always characterized the Jewish nation they transgressed, and were in consequence led into captivity. By the river of Babylon, far from their native land and the holy city and temple, the good lamented their sad lot, and endeavored by the austerity of their lives to move God to mercy; while the wicked plunged still more deeply into sin, and called down upon themselves a yet greater measure of the divine vengeance.

How aptly may not the words of their sacred text be applied to those who have entangled themselves in the meshes of a mixed marriage. They have not hearkened to the divine command which required them to use their liberty to marry "only in the Lord," but have contracted alliances for which the Church, in the words of her Sovereign Pontiffs, has a "horror," and which she "abominates" and "detests." They have united themselves with the enemies of God, and hence it is not well with them here, and we have only too great reason to fear that it will not be well with many of them hereafter. For, like the Jews in the captivity, while a few study to observe the divine law as far as their circumstances will permit, the many, unfortunately, appear to think little of the sin they have committed, but estrange themselves yet more and more from God. Hence, before concluding this series of sermons, I shall address a few words of advice and admonition to those who have already contracted such marriages, on the manner in which they should live in order to avert as much as possible from themselves and their children the evil consequences of the imprudent step they have taken. I shall suppose, as is perhaps most commonly the case, that the wife is the Catholic; and shall arrange what I have to say under the three following heads:

I. Her duties to herself;
II. Her duties to her husband; and,
III. Her duties to her children.

I. Her duties to herself.

It is not my intention to speak of those general laws that should regulate the conduct of all married persons, but only of those particular rules which the circumstances of a mixed marriage give rise to. First among these must be reckoned the duty of seeing that there is nothing in the marriage contrary to the laws of the Church, as far as those laws are applicable to a marriage of this kind. It frequently happens that a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic, having by the very act violated a great law of the Church, pays little attention to her other precepts. How often, for example, do we find a Catholic marrying without acquainting her pastor of the fact, or procuring the necessary dispensation, or going before a civil magistrate or an heretical minister, or marrying a person without knowing for certain whether he had been married before or not. If there are any irregularities of this kind, it is the strict duty of the Catholic to apply without delay to her pastor, either in the confessional or out of it, and have the error, whatever it is, corrected. It must be done some day, and the lapse of time will only add to the difficulty. Do not fear, the good priest is animated with the charity of his Divine Master, and though he hates the sin, he will yet be only too happy to welcome back the repentant sinner.

St. Paul, writing of the early Christian women who preferred marriage to virginity, said: "She shall have tribulation of the flesh"; and however true this is of married women in general, it is tenfold more true of those who have contracted a mixed marriage. They should then understand the difficulties in which they have involved themselves, which are neither few nor trivial. In no other position in life, perhaps, can there be so little true happiness. You who have married non-Catholics are bound to love, cherish, and live in the most intimate relations with a man who differs essentially from you on the most important question that can engage the human mind—the relation between you and your God. There can be no real sympathy at any time, much less when sickness or trials make you long most ardently for it. In the arduous duty of training up your children you are not only alone, but are obliged to act contrary to the convictions, and frequently also contrary to the commands of him whom most of all you should love and cherish; and you will be forced to see yourself fail, at least partially, in the most important matters. Under the most favorable circumstances a sense of loneliness and a weight of individual responsibility will be your daily bread. I could say much more, but will not, for I do not call these trials to your mind with a view of discouraging you, but rather to nerve you for the struggle in which you are engaged, and which, willingly or unwillingly, you must continue through life. Your first duty, then, is to recognize the difficulties of your situation, and to make use of such means as will enable you to pass successfully through them.

Surrounded thus by difficulties, and deprived in a great measure of human aid and consolation, you must learn to lean more and more upon God. And although you will doubtless meet with obstacles, sometimes insurmountable, in attending Mass, receiving the Sacraments, and complying with your other religious duties, you must not permit yourself to grow remiss. You owe it to yourself to be faithful in the use of these means of grace, for you, more than others, stand in need of them. You owe it to your non-Catholic partner, for you have solemnly promised to do all in your power to reclaim him from the error of his ways; but you owe it especially to your children, for their religious training devolves exclusively on you, and you must conduct it, as I have said, amid the greatest difficulties. Beware then of permitting yourself to grow careless, as too many unhappily do, who neglect the salvation of their own souls and those of their children, and who, so far from laboring for the conversion of their erring partners, rather confirm them in their unbelief. How terrible will be the account they must one day render to God!

Be no less on your guard against permitting yourself to frequent Protestant churches, either from curiosity or servile compliance with the wishes of your husband. Remember how Eve was led into sin by curiosity, who, as the Scripture narrates, "saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat" (Gen. iii. 6), and by so doing brought countless evils upon the whole human race to the end of time. Under no circumstances can it be lawful for you to take part in heretical worship, or to do or say anything that would approve of it. Resist every temptation of this kind with promptness and determination, remembering the words of the Holy Spirit: "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (Eccles. xix. 1).

But what is to be done if your husband forbids you to go to Mass and receive the Sacraments, or to pray at home, or would try to force you to disregard the days of fast or abstinence, as unfortunately happens too often? Ah, you should have thought of this before you made the fatal step of marrying out of the Church, and should have listened to those who tried to dissuade you from it. But now it is too late, and you must make the most of your trying situation. But, for your consolation, I will say that no creature can come between another and God. He has imposed on all mankind the obligation of adoring and serving Him, and a human law or command that would conflict with this duty is not and cannot be binding in conscience. While you should carefully avoid all contention and disputes, you must yet insist upon maintaining those rights which God has given you. Far too many Catholics married out of the Church surrender too easily, and yield without a protest at the first intimation of displeasure on the part of their husbands. Being but indifferent Catholics, as all are who contract a mixed marriage, they neither know the value of these means of grace and the need they have of them, nor understand the true nature of their obligation to obey the laws of the Church. If they afterward attempt to recover their rights they generally find it impossible. In the particular cases that may arise, have recourse to your pastor for advice and direction. And at all times pray to God that He would protect you in the dangers by which you are surrounded; for although you have acted contrary to His holy will in uniting yourself with one of His enemies, yet He never despises the prayer of the humble and contrite heart, and He will enable you to work out your salvation.

II. Her duties to her husband.

The Catholic wife has also special duties to perform toward her erring husband; one of the conditions on which the Church insists in every mixed marriage, and from which she never does and never can dispense, being, in the words of Pope Pius VIII., that the Catholic is "required to use every effort to withdraw the other from error." This is a duty that is unfortunately too generally neglected. Let us hope that you at least will not be found among the remiss. You are strictly bound to labor for the conversion of your husband, and if you fail to do so you are guilty of grievous sin, because it is a grave command. The most effectual means to this end will be the faithful fulfilment of your own religious duties, and the showing in the holiness of your own life the beauty of the religion to which you would win him. Example is more convincing and less obtrusive than argument, and as the continual dropping of water wears away the hardest rock, so the silent force of example will in the end make its impression on the most obdurate heart. But your example, bear in mind, is not merely to extend to the discharge of your religious duties. If the injunction of our Divine Saviour is binding upon all Christians, much more is it binding upon you to "so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16). You are to show in your daily life the influence of your religion, in your devotion to the duties of your state, in gentleness of temper, in the control of your tongue,—a most important matter,—by your patience, by never casting your husband's religion into his face, and by the many other ways in which the influence of religion shows itself in the outward conduct.

And do not fail to have recourse to God by fervent prayer. Remember the promises our Divine Redeemer has made to humble, persevering prayer. Call to mind and be encouraged by the example of such holy women as St. Monica, who in prayers and tears besought of God the conversion of her husband and son for many years before she had the happiness of seeing them embrace the true faith. If your prayers are as earnest and persevering as hers they will be equally efficacious. And consider the motives that should prompt you to pray: the greater harmony that will prevail in your family; the ease with which you will be able to fulfil your religious duties; the facility with which you will train up your family; the happiness you will enjoy in seeing him whom you love most upon earth a member of the true Church; and the consolation it will afford both you and him at the hour of death.

Study your religion, moreover, so as to be able to give your husband such explanations as he may desire from time to time. But carefully avoid disputation and argument on religious questions; it will as a general rule be productive of more harm than good, will embitter his feelings and prompt him to resist. But calm, well-timed conversations on matters of religion will not be out of place, and may be productive of much good; and if the force of your example has disposed him to listen favorably, your efforts may go far toward securing his conversion, and not only his conversion, but your own salvation also, according to the words of St. James: "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (v. 20). Besides, you have solemnly promised to use every effort to withdraw him from his errors. The better to do this, study especially by every gentle means to withdraw him as much as possible from heretical influences, whether it be that of friends or of books and papers, and try and induce him to read Catholic books. In the particular cases that may arise from time to time, seek the advice and direction of your confessor, who will be sufficiently acquainted with your circumstances to speak to the purpose.

III. Her duties to her children.

But the most important of all your duties are those which you owe to your children; and this for various reasons. As to yourself, you acted with a free will and at a time when your character was formed and your judgment ripe; and the same may be said of your husband. But it is not so with your children. God gives them to you in their infancy, He intrusts the moulding and forming of their religious and moral character to your hands; and He will hold you responsible before His dread tribunal for the manner in which you fulfil this most important duty. Let us, however, consider these duties in detail, mindful of the promise which both you and your husband made at the time of your marriage, that, according to the conditions and in the words of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, who alone on earth is divinely empowered to grant dispensations for such marriages, "the children of both sexes, to issue from the union, should be brought up exclusively in the sanctity of the Catholic religion." It was upon this condition that you were married, and had you or either of you refused to promise its fulfilment, the Church would never and could never have permitted your union. No law, human, ecclesiastical, or divine, can ever free you from this obligation.

But let us go still further into detail, and trace out these duties from the beginning. I must commence by warning you against a dreadful evil unhappily not uncommon at the present day, and must tell you plainly that, no matter what may be your trials or the difficulties you meet with in the education and training of your children, you cannot under any circumstances have recourse to any unnatural or unlawful means to prevent you from having a family. There is nothing that can justify such a course of conduct. The law laid down by our Divine Redeemer in regard to the absolute necessity of Baptism, that, "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 8), imposes upon you the sacred duty of having all your children baptized in the Catholic Church—if necessary even by stealth,—and of preventing them from being baptized in an heretical sect. And the reception of this Sacrament must not be deferred for an unreasonable and unnecessary length of time. The life of a new-born infant is very frail, and little is required to extinguish the vital spark; and what could be a more painful thought, or what a greater crime in a mother, than that a child of hers should through her fault die, or be in danger of dying, without the hope of ever seeing God?

According to the solemn promise you made at the time of your marriage, and according to the clearest dictates of reason, you are strictly bound to raise all your children without exception in the Catholic religion. You dare not consent, nor, as far as you are able to prevent it, permit such a division of the family as would allow the boys to follow the religion of the father and the girls that of the mother. And here in the training of your children is where you will meet with the greatest difficulty. Would to God you had been sensible of it in time; but you had eyes and saw not, you had ears and heard not, when your friends and those who had your welfare sincerely at heart sought to deter you from so perilous a step,—perilous to yourself, and more perilous to the children whom God might give you. O God, how the evils of a mixed marriage multiply as we advance and study it in detail! Then you must see that your children are prepared at the proper time and in the proper manner for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Confirmation, and the Holy Communion, and God grant that you may be able to do so; but your task will not be an easy one, nor will your success be perfect. You are also bound to use every effort to prevent your children from being sent to the infidel public schools; nor is this likely to be accomplished without difficulty. Yet it is a most sacred duty, and cannot be neglected without sin. And under no circumstances can you permit them to attend the Protestant Sunday-school, take part in their excursions, or read the papers and books which are so liberally distributed where there is hope of causing a Catholic child to apostatize from the faith.

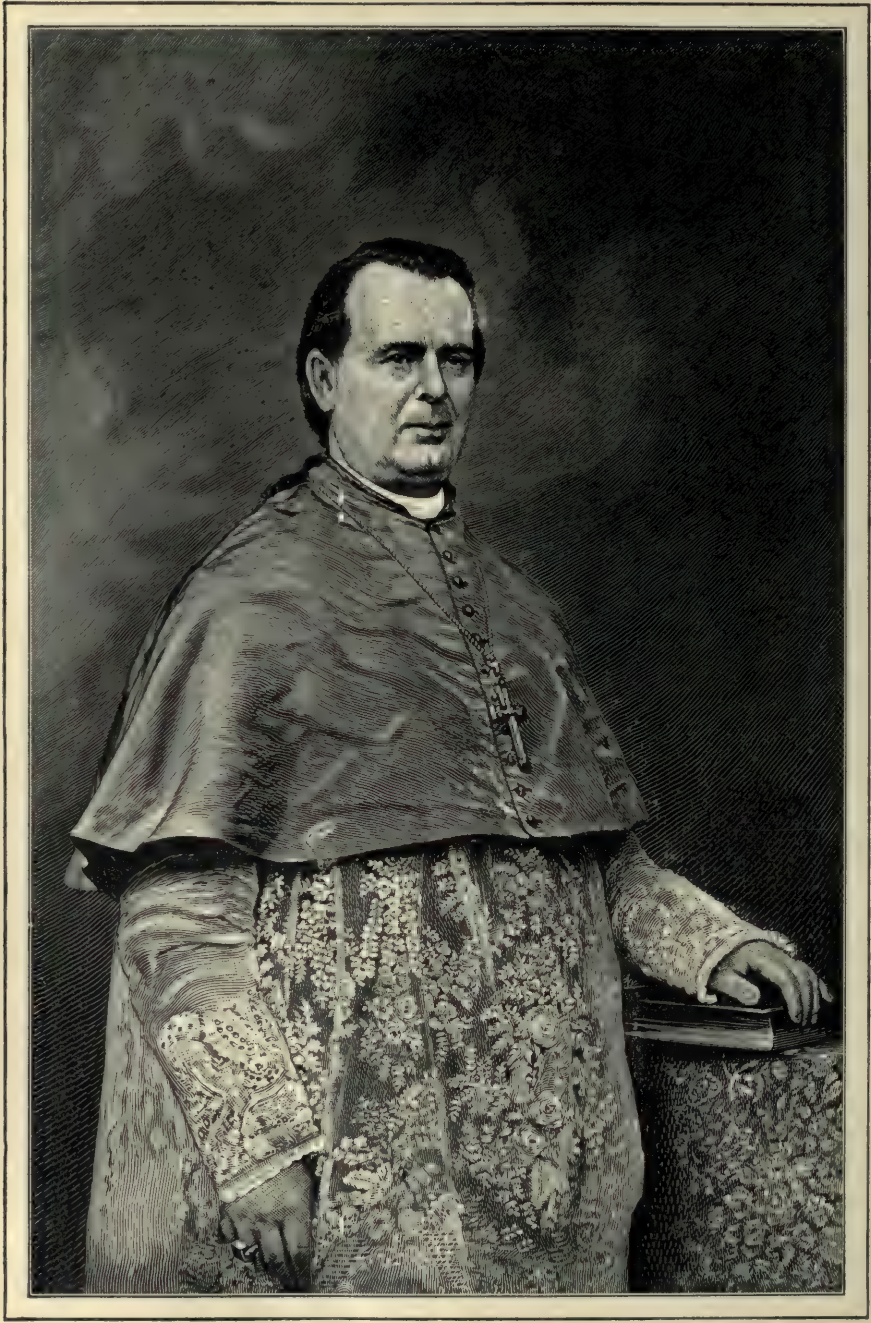
In addition to all this, you must, as your children grow up, sedulously make use of the means which I have pointed out to all parents of guarding their children against the danger of contracting a mixed marriage. Finally, in those peculiar circumstances which will occasionally arise, and in which you will stand in need of the advice of a friend in whom you can place entire confidence, have recourse to your confessor, candidly state your case to him, ask his advice, and having received it, follow it as closely as you are able.

Such, then, are some of your duties to yourself, to your husband, and to your children. Endeavor to fulfil them carefully, for much, very much, depends upon you. Be faithful in the discharge of your religious duties and do not permit yourself to grow remiss, and show by the holiness of your life the beauty of the religion you profess. Be mindful of the solemn promise you made when you were married, to use every effort to withdraw your husband from his errors. But, oh, be faithful to the sacred trust confided to you in the education and training of your children, and do not be disheartened by the obstacles that may stand in your way; for how could you bear the thought that any of those to whom, under God, you were instrumental in giving life, should be raised up ignorant of His holy law, enemies of His Church, or be in danger of being eternally separated from Him? Study to be able to say with your Divine Redeemer at the dread tribunal of God: "Of those whom Thou hast given me, I have not lost any one" (John xviii. 9).

But I cannot conclude this series of discourses without again remind-ing you all of the solemn manner in which mixed marriages have been condemned by God Himself in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; by the Church in all ages in the declarations of her Popes, her Councils, her Fathers, Theologians, and Bishops; and by the dictates of reason and the lessons of experience. I have also pointed out to you some at least of the principal causes which lead to this dreadful evil, as well as the duties of all Christians in relation to it, so that none among you can plead ignorance. There was a time when the smallness of the Catholic population offered a palliation, if not an excuse, for the disorder of mixed marriages, but that time is now happily past in almost every place, and to contract a mixed marriage at present must be looked upon as a wilful disregard of the known will of God and His Church, and a daring and inexcusable risk of one's eternal salvation and the salvation of many yet unborn. Let those, then, who are tempted to so great a sin as the contracting of a mixed marriage seriously consider how much they would be at variance with the spirit of their religion, how much such an act would expose themselves and their families to eternal ruin, how great would be the scandal, how great the devil's triumph, if they should unhappily yield. But if they resist such a temptation they will fulfil the will of God, they will act in harmony with the spirit of their religion and the dictates of right reason, will aid in opposing a great disorder, and will merit a special blessing from God. "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." Amen.

ARCHBISHOP RYAN.

Most Reverend Patrick John Ryan, D.D., was consecrated Bishop in 1872, and elevated to the Archbishopric of Philadelphia in 1884. His masterpiece of oratory was delivered at Baltimore, on the occasion of the Centenary of the Catholic Hierarchy in the United States, and is herewith presented.



Archbishop Ryan.

ELOQUENT DISCOURSE BY ARCHBISHOP RYAN, OF PHILADELPHIA.

DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IN THE UNITED STATES.

> "Simon, the High-Priest, the son of Onias, who in his life propped up the house, and in his days fortified the temple. By whom also the height of the temple was founded, the double building and the high walls of the temple. And as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God. . . . . And as branches of a palm tree, so they stood around about him and all the sons of Aaron in their glory."—ECCLESIASTICUS l. 1, 2, 7, 14.

MOST eminent Cardinals, Most Reverend Representatives of the Supreme Pontiff, Venerable Brothers of the Episcopate and the Clergy, Beloved Brethren of the Laity:—In this fiftieth chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus we read a glowing eulogy of the High-Priest Simon and a magnificent description of the religious ceremonies which he performed in the temple of God, surrounded by his priests, "the sons of Aaron, in their glory." These elaborate and striking ceremonies of the ritual of Israel were arranged in detail by Almighty God Himself. For the office of religion is to appeal not only to the intellect, but to the heart also, to the imagination, to the love of the beautiful, to every element which forms part of our being. This mission of religious ceremonial requires that it should be instructive, touching, beautiful, and permanent. The ceremonies of the temple foreshadowed those of the Christian Church, and the descriptions in this chapter and other portions of the Scripture, seem like a prophet's vision of a Pontifical or Papal Mass. You behold enacted here to-day a scene like that glorious one narrated in the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus. A Christian Pontiff offers the blood of the grape—the blood of the true vine, Jesus Christ Himself. Around the Pontiff stand the sons of Aaron in their glory; the singers have lifted up their voices in sweet melody, and "all the people fall down to the earth to adore the Lord their God and to pray to the Almighty God, the Most High."

Could these scenes influence the human soul as they do, if God had not planted an element within it to be so influenced? And passing upwards from Jewish and Christian ceremonials, we may contemplate with eyes of faith a scene to-day in the eternal Temple of God—the Simon of the American Hierarchy, the first Bishop that ruled the Church in these States, approaching the Throne of God, encircled by all the great and holy prelates, priests, and people who have passed to heaven during the past hundred years, praising and thanking the Most High for His manifold benedictions bestowed on the young American Church, and asking that these benedictions be perpetuated. In the glorious Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints we thus rejoice and thank and pray in unison with those who have passed away during this first century of the Church's life here. Yes, her first century in these United States, but not her first on this continent. We naturally look back with pardonable pride to three hundred years earlier, when the great Catholic discoverer of this New World, representing a Catholic nation, first planted the all-civilizing Cross on these shores. We were certainly here before any of the religious denominations of our separated brethren, and when the leader of the Reformation in Europe was still a Catholic boy. I rejoice to behold here to-day a representative of that older Catholicity in the person of a distinguished Mexican Bishop. We welcome, too, the representatives,—the representatives of Canada and of British America, the venerable Cardinal Archbishop of Quebec, the other Archbishops, Bishops, and Prelates who honor us. We know that the Hierarchy of South America is in sympathy with this great celebration. It is as a religious reunion of all the Americas, and I trust it shall be but the beginning of a still more intimate union in the future. We behold also present a prelate representing England, where the first American Bishop spent much time and received Episcopal consecration, and from which country the first Catholic settlers of Maryland came with their noble leader, Lord Baltimore. Ireland, Germany, France, and other European countries are well represented in their children and their descendants amongst prelates, priests, and people. It is, in very truth, a great historic Catholic celebration, calculated to gladden the heart of the present successor of the founder of the American Hierarchy, and the inheritor of his spirit and virtues, and the hearts of all his brother Bishops and their priests; an occasion to gratify the learned Archbishop who represents here to-day the Roman Pontiff, to whom this young American Church has ever been devoted, and to rejoice and console the heart of the great Pontiff himself, when he shall hear of its success. It is a celebration that ought to thrill every fibre of every Catholic heart in the land, and which ought to deeply interest thinking men of all denominations or of no denomination.

Interesting as is the history of the Church in this New World, during the period that preceded the formation of this Government, yet there are special features worthy of examination in her history of the last century in these States. We behold her unity and Catholicity combined, adapted to a state of society new in the history of the world.

Up to that time men generally legislated for a single people of the same race, color, and nationality. The Fathers of this Republic had to form a constitution and government for people of every race, language, color, and nationality whom they foresaw would inhabit this land. They had to combine a political catholicity with a political unity, and to hold the most discordant elements together by force of law. So also, before the establishment of the Catholic Church in this world, religions were national in their organizations, though universal in their fundamental principles, and were adapted to particular peoples of the same race and language. But the Church was destined to embrace within her government the peoples of every nation under Heaven, to combine the most diverse elements in perfect unity, intellectual, governmental, and sacramental; and to hold them there for all time. And in no one country in the world had she to so exercise this power as here, for nowhere else were they found together. The organization of this government and the organization of the Church here were, therefore, striking and suggestive coincidents. I believe that before another century shall have passed, thoughtful men will clearly see that this wonderful catholicity and unity of the Church that have survived the vicissitudes and revolutions of nearly two thousand years, will prove most powerful auxiliaries for the perpetuation of our political union. In the civil war of a quarter of a century ago, all non-Catholic denominations separated into Northern and Southern organizations, and have not yet healed the wounds of that separation. The Catholic Church alone remained united. The Bishops of Boston and Charleston were members of one national organization. The greater the diversity of element in a country or a Church, the greater must be the unitive powers that keep them combined. In other words, that religious unity and catholicity are necessary to preserve political unity and catholicity. For want of this conservative power the Roman Empire fell. Its attempted union of all nations under one government was a failure, because there was no moral bond strong enough to repress those passions that ever lead to disintegration and anarchy.

Let us, dear Fathers and Brethren, glance at the Church in this country during the past century, and endeavor to understand its action and spirit, under circumstances so peculiar. And by the past we may judge of the yet more glorious future. As the student of our national history in observing the rise of the young Republic itself, naturally fixes his attention on the great leader who embodied in himself the principles and the spirit of that period, and, from the study of the character of George Washington, learns the genius of the time; so in our ecclesiastical history we behold one man, the first Catholic Bishop of these States, who embodied the spirit of that period, and whose life and character naturally present themselves in the first place for our consideration on this great Centennial Celebration of his appointment. Like Simon the High-Priest, he fortified the moral temple and enlarged the city of God ; and as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God, and the bishops that followed him have "walked in his light and in the brightness of his rising."

The men whom God destines as great instruments of His providence, He prepares by apparently accidental causes for their mission. Dr. John Carroll, the son of devoted Irish Catholic parents, inherited the deep faith of his ancestors. Destined to hold so conspicuous a place as leader of the American Church, he was born in Maryland in 1735. At the age of fifteen he was sent to the Jesuit College of St. Omer's, in French Flanders, where he met people of various nationalities, who helped to enlarge and catholicize his mind, without weakening his patriotism. Here he studied under the admirable system of the Jesuit Fathers, and finally became a member of their society. Subsequently he was a professor of philosophy and theology in their scholasticate, and thus enjoyed all the advantages of a thorough Jesuit system of education and religious training. To some it may appear that such a training serves rather to narrow the mind, and causes it to move in a certain fixed groove; that as in civil society, the individual must yield some of his personal liberty for the good of the many, so in a most perfect and united society like that of the Jesuits the individual is almost lost in the community. It is certainly the greatest society in the Catholic Church, as a society, but has not, it is said, produced the greatest individuals in the Church's history, because the greater the society the less the individual. Hence some would claim that this training would unfit a man for the great mission of founding the American Hierarchy. But though it may be true that individual liberty is curtailed in the society, we must bear in mind that it is much less so than is generally imagined, and the fact that a man is generally assigned to the work best adapted to his individual tastes and tendencies is more than compensation for this curtailment. You cannot have a great society without great constituents of it, though their individuality may not be conspicuous. No one can question the excellence of the religious training of the society, its deep but rational asceticism, its preparation of the mind and soul, by solitude and humiliation, for the most exalted positions. There never was a great soul formed without such solitude. What the wise man calls "the fascinato nugacitatis," the fascination of trifling, distracts and weakens it. In the deep solitudes of Citeaux and Clairvaux did the soul of St. Bernard, communing with God, imbibe that wonderful power, that divine energy which afterward moved the world, without disturbing its own peace. In the silence and mysterious communings of Manresa did the first Jesuit, Ignatius, lay the foundations, deep and strong and enduring, of that active life which he subsequently led, and of the great society which he formed. There did he conceive the plan and arrange the spiritual tactics of that army which afterward fought so bravely and so wisely for the Kingdom of Christ, under the standard of the Supreme King, in the plain around Jerusalem—the New Jerusalem of the Church of God. In solitude the soul realizes the vanity of all things human, the shortness of time, the greatness of eternity, the awful responsibility of power, especially where human souls were concerned. This young American religious was destined to stand on the pinnacle of power, to be exalted above his fellows, and now he has to be prepared for this bewildering elevation, lest, Lucifer-like, he might grow dizzy, through pride, and fall, bringing with him many companions who had looked up to him as their leader. The suppression of the Society of Jesus, in 1773, left Father Carroll a secular priest, and free to return to his native country. The suppression caused him the most intense grief. He bowed, however, with resignation to the inscrutable decree of Providence. He well knew that no individual and no society is essential to the Church's existence; that her divine life will be perpetuated, no matter how many of her children fall. That glorious Society had for over two hundred years led the van of the Christian army. Its suppression seemed an act of suicide, but the power which gave it life and suppressed it called it also to its resurrection. Pope Pius VII.—1814—just one year before the death of Archbishop Carroll, re-established it. It was the supreme dying consolation of the American prelate.

The suppression of his beloved Society had the effect of bringing him back to America, and I cannot but think that it predisposed him in favor of that great principle in the American Constitution which declared that the State should not interfere in religious matters. He saw the influence of State opposition to the Society, as his letters express. If Church and State were harmonious in faith and practice, their union, when properly regulated, might do good. But where Church and State are antagonistic in faith and principles, and especially where there are so many diverse denominations as with us, the American system of leaving each organization free to act out its mission seems the best one. Otherwise, such unions are like mixed marriages or marriages of convenience. For several years previous to Dr. Carroll's appointment as Bishop of Baltimore, the question was discussed of such an appointment to some American city. In 1756, Bishop Challoner, then Vicar-Apostolic of the London District, proposed Philadelphia as the most suitable place, because of the freedom enjoyed by Catholics in Pennsylvania under the influence of the gentle spirit and laws of William Penn and his followers. But it must be admitted that Maryland had still stronger claims, because of the greater number of Catholics there, because of her Catholic founder and his noble stand for religious freedom. At the age of 40 Dr. Carroll returned to his native country, after twenty-five years' residence in Europe. For fifteen years he occupied high positions of trust here, and was for some time Prefect-Apostolic. On the 6th of November, 1789, he was appointed first Bishop of Baltimore and head of the Catholic Church in the United States. In compliance with a promise made to an English gentleman, Mr. Weld, of Lulworth Castle, he was consecrated in his domestic chapel by Bishop Walmesley, Vicar-Apostolic of the London District, the Book of the Gospels being held over his shoulders by the son of his friend, afterward the distinguished Cardinal Weld. In a private letter to Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, Bishop Carroll wrote that were it not for this request and promise he would have preferred the consecration to have taken place in America or in Ireland, the land of his Catholic forefathers. His consecration took place on the 15th of August, 1790, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, under whose patronage he placed the young Church of these States. By a remarkable coincidence, to-day is the festival of that patronage.

Bishop Carroll was then 55 years old. Twenty-five years of work, laborious and faithful, were still before him. The spirit that animated these memorial years, the sense of great responsibility and the necessity of personal sanctification and incessant toil, are expressed in his inaugural address on the occasion of his installment as Bishop in this city. It was the inaugural of the American Hierarchy and deserves to be heard. Listen to the words as they well up from the heart of the great first American Bishop:

"It is no longer enough for me to be inoffensive in my conduct and regular in my manners. God now imposes a severer duty upon me. I shall incur the guilt of violating my pastoral office if all my endeavors be not directed to bring your lives and all your actions to a conformity with the laws of God; to exhort, to conjure, to reprove, to enter into all your sentiments; to feel all your infirmities; to be all things to all, that I may gain all to Christ; to be superior to human respect; to have nothing in view but God and your salvation; to sacrifice to these health, peace, reputation, and even life itself; to hate sin and yet love the sinner; to repress the turbulent; to encourage the timid; to watch over the conduct of even the ministers of religion; to be patient and meek; to embrace all kinds of persons. These are now my duties,—extensive, pressing, and indispensable duties; these are the duties of all my brethren in the episcopacy, and surely important enough to fill us with terror. But there are others still more burdensome to be borne by me in this particular portion of Christ's Church which is committed to my charge, and where everything is to be raised, as it were, from its foundation; to establish ecclesiastical discipline; to devise means for the religious education of Catholic youth—that precious portion of pastoral solicitude; to provide an establishment for training up ministers for the sanctuary and the services of religion, that we may no longer depend on foreign and uncertain coadjutors; not to leave unassisted any of the faithful who are scattered through this immense continent; to preserve their faith untainted amidst the contagion of error surrounding them on all sides; to preserve in their hearts a warm charity and forbearance toward every other denomination of Christians, and at the same time to preserve them from that fatal and prevailing indifference which views all religions as equally acceptable to God and salutary to men. Ah! when I consider those additional duties, my heart sinks almost under the impression of terror which comes upon it. In God alone can I find any consolation. He knows by what steps I have been conducted to this important station and how much I have always dreaded it. He will not abandon me unless I first draw down His malediction by my unfaithfulness to my charge. Pray, dear brethren, pray incessantly, that I may not incur so dreadful a punishment. Alas! the punishment would fall on you as well as on myself; my unfaithfulness would rebound on you and deprive you of some of the means of salvation."

This inaugural address has the true ring in it, and proved the programme of his future action. Though the fundamental principles that govern all Bishops in the Church are similar, yet there are adaptations to circumstances which will vary with these circumstances, and in which the individuality and wisdom or unwisdom of each prelate become apparent. When St. Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine to preach Christianity in England he charged him to accommodate himself, as much as faith and essential discipline would permit, to the circumstances of the new country in which he found himself. This he accordingly did, and hence he was so marvellously successful. Bishop Carroll, by a natural instinct, did the same. He was very broad and liberal in his views, thoroughly American in his sentiments, and most charitable in his feelings toward those who were not of his faith; but he never strayed beyond the domain of true Catholic principles by any false liberality. He knew and loved the Church, and he well understood that there was no real antagonism between the principles of the new republican Government and those of the old Catholic Church. He knew that Church's power to command respect and obedience for authority and for those who wielded it, and he knew how much this would be required in a Republic where the magistrates, being elected by the people, might be less respected than hereditary kings born to command. He understood how the mission of the new Government would be, as I have said, like the Church's own mission, to combine Catholicity with unity.

He had personal experience of this combination in his own priests. His first Diocesan Synod was held in 1791, the year after his consecration. It consisted of only twenty-one priests, but they represented seven different nationalities, not merely countries of birth, which may be of comparatively little importance with people of the same race, but seven different and somewhat antagonistic people—American, Irish, English, German, French, Belgian, and Holland—yet all acted in their true character of American priests under his leadership.

Bishop Carroll was an American patriot as well as a Christian Bishop. Love of country and of race is a feeling planted by God in the human heart, and, when properly directed, becomes a natural virtue. Now there is a pernicious tendency in some minds to so separate the natural from the supernatural as to make them appear antagonistic. As reason comes from God as well as revelation, so also do all the great virtues—truthfulness, honor, courage, manliness, from which the very name of virtue is derived, and patriotism—spring up under His fostering care. And as it would be wrong to regard the purely natural, ignoring the supernatural, so also is it wrong and narrow to regard exclusively the supernatural without reference to that on which it must be based, and which, like itself, is God's holy work, though in an inferior order. Bishop Carroll's patriotism never conflicted with his religion, for he always acted for God from a sense of duty, whether preaching the Gospel in Baltimore or with his friend, Benjamin Franklin, acting as representative of the Colonial Government in his mission to Quebec.

The new Bishop thoroughly appreciated how important for the Church's progress as well as for the stability of the State was the diffusion of education. He knew that men must be educated in order to successfully govern themselves. Hence one of his first projects was to foster the now time-honored institution, Georgetown College.

Of all the false charges alleged against the Catholic Church, the most senseless and unfounded is that she fears science and is the enemy of education. Her opponents, almost in the same breath, charge her with being the foe at once and the monopolizer of education. They behold her great religious orders of men and women devoted to the work of education, making more sacrifices for it than any other body of men and women on earth, vowing at God's altar that until they go down into their graves they shall devote themselves in poverty, chastity, and obedience to the great work of educating the human mind and heart. And the last man in the world to fear intellectual progress, whether popular or individual, is the Catholic. He well knows that truth is one, that God cannot contradict in the revelation of Scripture what He exhibits in the revelation of science. Hence a man's fearlessness of such science will be in proportion to the certainty of his conviction of the truths of revelation. If I have only religious opinions, more or less certain, I may fear that some scientific truth will be discovered which will show them to be false; but if I am absolutely certain of my religious faith, I feel perfectly secure. Now no one can question the fact of the certainty that exists in the mind of Catholics that they are dogmatically right. This certainty is sometimes regarded as a fanaticism by religious skeptics who have not the gift of faith. But whether it be founded on reason or fanaticism, the fact is there, and hence the Catholic Church has never feared and can never fear the progress of science and education, but has always been their active promoter. Hence Bishop Carroll simply acted in harmony with the spirit of the Church when he founded Georgetown College, and the Catholic Bishops of the country are now but acting in the same spirit in the foundation of the Catholic University of America in Washington. Its inauguration very appropriately follows this centennial celebration. As to purely ecclesiastical studies, the Bishop deemed himself most fortunate in having the good Sulpician Fathers to direct them. Though loving intensely the Society of Jesus, he was too great and broad a man to have any of that exclusive order pride that would restrict perfection to any organization. He saw the great Kingdom of God on earth, His Church, with its wonderful unity and variety, moving onward in its great mission. The perfect spirit of the secular priesthood was exhibited in the Sulpician, that of the religious in the Jesuit; the union of both was shown forth in laying the great foundation of the Catholic Church in these States.

The jurisdiction of the new Bishop extended ever the entire country, but he soon found it impossible, because of the increase of Catholics and the great distance of the places and difficulties of travel as well as his advanced age, to faithfully guard so scattered a flock. The Bishops who in 1810 were appointed to aid him in the great work were apostolic men animated by his own spirit, like the sainted Bishop Flaget, of Bardstown; Egan, of Philadelphia; and Cheverus, of Boston. It would be, of course, impossible in this discourse to give you an adequate idea of the marvellous progress of religion during the twenty-five years of the episcopal life of Archbishop Carroll. The results are thus summed up by our admirable Church historian, Dr. Gilmary Shea:

"When Archbishop Carroll resigned to the hands of his Maker his life and the office he had held for a quarter of a century, the Church, fifty years before so utterly unworthy of consideration to mere human eyes, had become a fairly organized body, instinct with life and hope, throbbing with all the freedom of a new country. An Archbishopric and four suffragan sees, another diocese beyond the Mississippi, with no endowments from princes or nobles, were steadily advancing; churches, institutions of learning and charity, all arising by the spontaneous offerings of those who, in most cases, were manfully struggling to secure a livelihood or modest competence. The diocese of Baltimore had theological seminaries, a novitiate and scholasticate, colleges, convents, academies, schools, and a community devoted to education and works of mercy. The press was open to diffuse Catholic truth and refute false or perverted representations. In Pennsylvania there were priests and churches through the mountain districts to Pittsburgh, and all was ripe for needed institutions. In New York Catholics were increasing west of Albany, and it had been shown that a college and an academy for girls would find ready support at the episcopal city, where a Cathedral had been commenced before the arrival of the long-expected Bishop. In New England the faith was steadily gaining under the wise rule of the pious and charitable Bishop Cheverus. In the West the work of Badin and Nerinckx, seconded and extended by Bishop Flaget, was bearing its fruit. There was a seminary for priests, communities of sisters were forming, and north of the Ohio the faith had been revived in the old French settlements, and Catholic immigrants from Europe were visited and encouraged. Louisiana had been confided to the zealous and active Bishop Du Bourg, destined to effect so much for the Church in this country. Catholicity had her churches and priests in all the large cities from Boston to Augusta, and Westward to St. Louis and New Orleans, with many in smaller towns; there being at least a hundred churches and as many priests exercising the ministry. Catholics were free; the days of penal laws had departed; professions were open to them; and, in most States, the avenue to all public offices. In the late war with England they had shown their patriotism on the field and on the waves."

For the seventy-five years that have passed since the death of the first American Archbishop, the Hierarchy of the country, backed by devoted priests and faithful, generous people, have continued the great work.

In the Hierarchy during these years appeared men who were remarkable in a new and missionary country, and would have been remarkable in any country and age,—men like Archbishop Francis Patrick Kenrick, of this See, the greatest of our dead ecclesiastics, as his brother of St. Louis is the greatest among our living ones. There were Bishop England, Archbishop Hughes, Bishop Michael O'Connor, Archbishops Spalding and Purcell, and the great apostolic men—Bishops Bruté, Cheverus, Flaget, Timon, Neumann, and Wood. Nor should we forget the gentle, eloquent, and prudent first American Cardinal—McCloskey—of New York.

If I speak of the episcopate especially, it is only because this is the centennial celebration of its establishment. Otherwise I would not omit the great name of Monsignor Corcoran. I cannot, of course, forget that, as generals cannot gain victories unless sustained by able officers and soldiers, neither could the episcopate of the country unless the devoted priests, secular and regular, sustained them. The great religious orders and congregations did their noble work here. The sons of St. Ignatius, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Benedict, St. Alphonsus and St. Augustus, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Paul of the Cross, St. Paul the Apostle, and others have bravely sustained the episcopate, whilst the devoted secular clergy, who for years endured untold labor and poverty, were the most numerous and powerful of all the actors in the Church's progress. We rejoice to behold here to-day so many representatives of these elements of power. But what could bishops and priests effect without you, "our joy and our crown," the devoted, generous, intellectual laity of the United States? To you and yours God sent us. For you and yours the Catholic ecclesiastic makes every sacrifice of human ambition and human love. These sacrifices you have appreciated and you have nobly sustained us.

We are glad to behold you here to-day in such vast numbers and with so much genuine enthusiasm; and on this great historic occasion you must not be mere observers, but we trust your representatives will speak out freely and fearlessly in the Lay Congress which forms so interesting a feature in this centennial celebration. You know how false is the charge of the enemies of the Church that you are priest-ridden.

It is now time that an active, educated laity should take and express interest in the great questions of the day affecting the Church and society. I believe there is not in the world a more devoted laity than we have in the Church of these States. I find, too, that the best educated amongst them, and notably the converts, are sound on the great questions of the day and loyal to the Church. We should bear in mind, too, the great work done by the laity as publicists and editors during the past century, done by men like the great Dr. Brownson—for great he certainly was; by the disinterested, impulsive, and talented McMaster; the polished Dr. Huntingdon; by that most devoted martyr, as I may term him, to Catholic journalism, Patrick Vincent Hickey, of the *Catholic Review*, and others whom time will not permit mention in detail. By the united action of bishops, priests, and laymen we have results of progress in the last century the statistics of which are truly astonishing. And what is particularly remarkable is the fact that in the section of the country where opposition to the Church was most deep and violent, the progress was greatest. I allude to the New England States. Within the memory of the present Metropolitan of Boston—that is about sixty years ago—New England had but one Bishop, two priests, and two public places of worship. She has now one Archbishop, six Bishops, 942 priests, and 619 churches, with private chapels, colleges, schools, and benevolent institutions, and population in proportion. Those who do not desire the progress of the Catholic Church should never persecute her. The general statistics of the Church during the century are, briefly, as follows:

When Bishop Carroll was consecrated in 1790, the entire population of the United States was a little less than four millions—the Catholic population was estimated at about forty thousand; thirty priests ministered to this scattered flock. There was not a single hospital or asylum throughout the land. The churches were only the few modest houses of worship erected in Catholic settlements, chiefly in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Georgetown College, just then founded, was the only Catholic seat of learning in the country.

Glance at the present. The population of the United States has grown within a century from four to sixty-five millions of people; the progress of the Church has more than kept pace with the material development of the country. There is now embraced within the territory of the United States a Catholic population of about nine millions. There are thirteen Archbishops and seventy-one Bishops, eight thousand priests, ten thousand five hundred churches and chapels, twenty-seven seminaries exclusively devoted to the training of candidates for the sacred ministry. There are six hundred and fifty colleges and academies for the higher education of the youth of both sexes, and three thousand one hundred parish schools. There are five hundred and twenty hospitals and orphan asylums. What is of immense importance is that her spirit has in nothing degenerated. She is alive to-day with a divine energy and fecundity that will continue to multiply these great results.

The remarkable statistics quoted become marvellous when we consider the antagonism of the great majority of the people to the Catholic Church. The objections to it were those urged by the pagans in the first century of Christianity—first, its supposed exorbitant claims and exclusiveness. Christianity was not content to have its God occupy a place among the deities of the Pantheon, but declared that He, and He alone, was the true God. This was deemed an insult to the gods of the Empire. Here was the Catholic Church, so few in numbers and so weak in influence, boldly claiming that Christ established but one Church, and that all others were simply human institutions, more or less true in their teachings, as they agreed or disagreed with her own. She indeed wished freedom for all, but did not for an instant concede that all could be true. Again, as in pagan days, her perfect organization was feared as possibly dangerous to the State, and the extraordinary spectacle was exhibited to the world of a great and numerous political party, afraid to act in open day, and entering into a secret society against a handful of their fellow-citizens. But God brought good out of evil. Few people realize how much indirect benefit this cowardly opposition was to the Church during the brief, inglorious existence of the party prophetically named at its birth "Know Nothing."

The thoughtful men of the nation who opposed this party were driven into the ranks of the Church's defenders. They studied her history and doctrines. Important conversions and the clearing away of much ignorance and prejudice were the results. The civil war, which so retarded the progress of the nation and all religious institutions, including our own, and split up all non-Catholic denominations into Northern and Southern organizations, showed forth, as I have already said, the united power of the Catholic Church. The war also exhibited her marvellous and well-regulated charity. Sisters of Charity and of Mercy ministered to the sick and wounded, irrespective of party. Sisters of Northern birth and principles nursed the Southern soldiers, and Sisters of Southern birth and principles, whose brothers were fighting in the ranks of the Confederate army, were found nursing their Northern foes. These Sisters acted as silent evangelists of the old Church. They quietly revolutionized popular opinion concerning her. I speak from experience, for during the war one of the largest prisons of the country, known as "McDowell's College," was in my parish in St. Louis, and I acted as chaplain to it and to the hospital attached. There were from a thousand to twelve hundred inmates frequently imprisoned here, and I know how deeply these Southern soldiers were affected by the self-sacrificing devotion of the Sisters, who every day came to minister to and console them. Very few of these men were Catholics, and many of them were deeply hostile to the Church, yet the vast majority who died in that hospital, and a large proportion of those who left the prison (six hundred has been considered a low estimate), received Catholic baptism. They believed, they said, that the Church of these Sisters must be the Church of God, and so commenced their examination of its doctrines. The same was true of Southern prisons, containing Northern soldiers. The brave men on both sides who survived could never afterward hear these Sisterhoods insulted by ignorant bigotry. Hence, since the war, there is a great change in popular sentiment in relation to the Catholic Church. In addition to this, it must be remembered, Catholics and Protestants now associate more frequently and intimately and understand each other better. Intelligent Protestants are gradually disabused of the old notion that the Catholics exalt the Blessed Virgin to a position equal to that of the Son, that priests can forgive sins according to their pleasure, that images may be adored after the fashion of the pagans, that the Bible should not be read, and other absurd supposed doctrines and practices of the Church. Because of the enlightenment, and because of the high character of American converts in the past, men like Dr. Brownson, Dr. Ives, Father Hecker, and many, many others, it is possible that some of the ablest defenders of the Church in this coming century will be men who are at present in the ranks of her opponents.

But, Fathers and brethren, whilst we are grateful for the blessings bestowed by Almighty God on the young Church of these States during the past century, whilst we unite in the glorious "Te Deum" of gratitude, we must also bear in mind that there are statistics of losses known only to the mind of God, that many have fallen away by wilful neglect of God's grace, that many have been lost by mixed marriages, that many converts would have entered the Church if Catholics had been individually more temperate and more edifying. To-day we should add to our "Te Deums" our acts of contrition. I believe, also, that in the last century we could have done more for the colored people of the South and the Indian tribes. I am not unmindful of the zeal, with limited resources for its exercise, of the Southern Bishops, nor the great self-sacrifice of Indian missionaries, who, in the spirit of primitive Christianity, gave their lives for the noble but most unjustly treated Indian tribes. But, as I believe, the negro slavery and the unjust treatment of the Indians are the two great blots upon the American civilization, so I feel that in the Church also the most reasonable cause for regret in the past century is the fact that more could have been done for the same dependent classes. Let us now, in the name of God, resolve to make reparation for these shortcomings of the past.

A magnificent future is before the Church in this country, if we are only true to her, to the country, and to ourselves. She has demonstrated that she can live and move onwards without State influence, that the atmosphere of liberty is most congenial to her constitution, and most conducive to her progress. Let us be cordially American in our feelings and sentiments, and, above all, let each individual act out in his personal life and character the spirit of Catholic faith.

On ourselves depends the future of the Church in these States. We have an organization perfectly united. We have dogmas of religion that give motive for restraint of human passion, appealing to the fear, love, and gratitude of the human soul. These dogmas are fixed and certain, and hence so powerful. The Church is alive, with the Spirit of God at its very soul. As she enters on this second century of her great mission here, let us renew our spiritual allegiance to her, let us ever glory in being her children, and endeavor to prove ourselves worthy of the name.

And do thou, O Eternal and Most Sacred God, who a century ago blessed this infant Church then persecuted, "this poor little one tossed with tempest and without all comfort, and placed her stones in order and her foundations in sapphire," oh, bless her again to-day, as she enters on her second century of apostolic mission! Send down wisdom that sitteth by Thy throne to illuminate the intellects of her Pontiffs, Priests, and people! Send forth Thy Spirit that it may brood over the troubled waters and the moral chaos of this age, and restore peace and order in human hearts and human society. Oh, give to this fresh young Church the spirit of primitive Christianity, its courage, its mortification, its indifference to money, and cause it to conquer the bold, aggressive paganism of the nineteenth century, as its prototype crushed the paganism of the first. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON ON ST. AGNES.

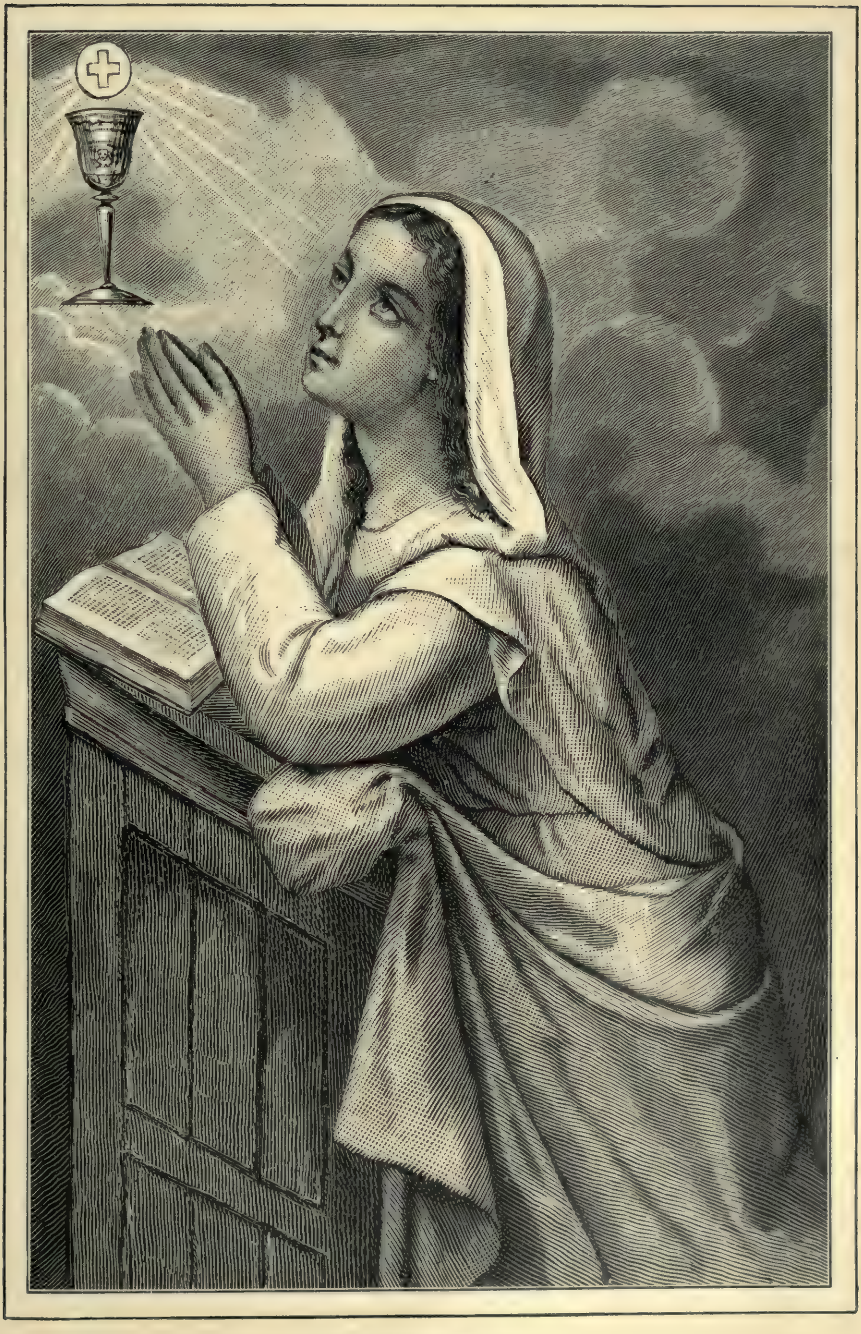
Preached in St. Agnes' Church, New York, January 26, 1890.

BY REV. HENRY A. BRANN, D.D.

"But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace in me hath not been void."—1 Cor. xv. 10.

IT is now almost sixteen hundred years since the little girl whom we honor and invoke to-day was beheaded. It was the dreadful year of our Lord three hundred and three, in the darkest hour of the tenth persecution in the reign of the despot Diocletian. Christian churches were closed, Christian property confiscated; priest, bishop, and pontiff pined in dungeons or lay hid in caves, and the faithful were hunted like wild beasts. The tigers in the amphitheatre grew fat on the bodies of martyrs. In every town and city of the Roman empire, from Gaul to Asia Minor, the smoke and flame of the funeral pyre obscured the skies, and the sound of the executioner's axe rang out on the frightened air. Seventeen thousand of the followers of Christ were put to death in one month. The desolation described by the prophet reigned throughout the fold of Christ: "How hath the Lord covered with obscurity the daughter of Sion in His wrath! how hath He cast down from heaven to the earth the glorious one of Israel." The whole machinery of Roman law and imperial power was used in one great brutal effort to destroy the Church, who sat like "Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Unlike Rachel, however, she was conscious of an immortal life that no human power could destroy.

Of all the victims of that dreadful persecution none has been more honored than the holy child who is the patroness of this parish. The early fathers and learned theologians of all times have deemed her worthy of their pens, poets have sung her virtues in canticles of praise, beautiful temples have been dedicated to her honor and have perpetuated her fame.



Ardent Love.

In this very church the sweetest notes of voice and instrument echo her name, and year after year from this spot eloquence has told the story of the sublime and supernatural life of Agnes. Let us endeavor this morning, my brethren, to recount her virtues and draw from them practical lessons for our own spiritual good.

The thought that arises naturally in the mind of the reader of her short and simple life, as told in the acts of her martyrdom, is that she was a miracle of grace. We know that, according to St. Thomas, the word miracle is properly applied only to those works of God which exceed the forces or are contrary to the laws of physical nature. We know also that in the spiritual order it is often hard to tell where the divine begins and the human ends, so perfectly, at times, are the two elements in accord. But there are extraordinary facts in the spiritual order, in which we can find nothing human except the substance which underlies them; there are lives in which the divine power seems to take completely the place of nature, subdue human impulses and passions, and produce effects contrary to them. These results may be called miracles of grace. Such a life was that of St. Paul, once the fierce persecutor, then changed into the zealous apostle, who, after his conversion, speaks of himself in the words of my text: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace in me hath not been void"; and again, elsewhere, he says: "If by grace it is not now by works, otherwise grace is no more grace." Such a life was that of St. Agnes, to whom the same texts fitly apply. For whether we consider her virginity or her martyrdom, or their logical outcome, the worship which she receives in the Christian Church, we find three facts in which there is nothing human; three facts contrary to the ordinary laws of human nature; three miracles of the moral order, which prove the divinity of Christ and His Church almost as forcibly as the miracles of the physical order recorded in the Bible. I need not ask you, my brethren, to give me your attention this morning, while I briefly examine these three miracles and their consequence. You are the clients and admirers of St. Agnes. Your devotion to her will make amends for my shortcomings. Sweet saint, obtain for me the grace to do justice to thy fame and to the Holy Faith for which thou didst pour out thy virgin blood!

Virginity, my brethren, does not consist in bodily integrity, but in absolute mental purity and the fixed purpose to preserve it. St. Cyprian calls virgins the "blossom of ecclesiastical seed, the glory and ornament of spiritual grace, the nobler part of the flock of Christ." "Who," says the great St. Ambrose, the panegyrist of St. Agnes, "can esteem any beauty greater than the splendor of virginity, which is loved by the king, approved by the judge, dedicated to the Lord, consecrated to God." Such was the beauty of Agnes, for she is counted among those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and "sing a new canticle before the throne," which no one else can sing.

St. Agnes had made a solemn vow of virginity, the most perfect and the most heroic of all the sacrifices that have purity for their object. She had thus consecrated her soul and body to Jesus Christ, whom in the whole course of her trial she calls her Spouse, to the wonder of the judge and the anger and the jealousy of her pagan lover, who could not understand her. Her answer to his entreaties was that she was pledged for life to Him "whose ministers are angels," to One "whose power is greater, whose aspect is more charming, whose love is sweeter, whose grace is more ravishing than any one to whom He could be compared"; to Him "at whose touch the sick are healed, and by the odor of whose virtue the dead are awakened." By this vow she sacrificed the right even to lawful pleasures, and put herself in opposition to every passion and appetite of human nature. No wonder that her pagan judge, her pagan lover, and her pagan audience thought the young enthusiast insane. They could not understand Christian self-abnegation. She could have been dispensed from the vow, and every means was used to change her purpose. Her wooer, Procopius, offered her lawful marriage. His friends and his father seconded his suit. He was the son of the prefect of Rome—the highest judge in the city, except the emperor. Procopius was young and handsome. He appealed to every motive that has influence in the human heart—to ambition, natural cupidity, and sympathy. He offered her great wealth, a palace, high rank, and the love of a devoted heart. Where is the woman of the world who would have refused such an offer of marriage? Was not the refusal of Agnes divine?

We know that even the ordinary forms of continence are impossible without divine grace, for the inspired wise man says: "I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it." The proof of this statement is found in every page of history and of literature, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian. The Bible declares it from the Sodom of Lot to the Jerusalem of the days of Herod; from Dalila to Herodias, from the polygamous patriarchs to the adulterous David and Solomon. Even the Mosaic code, the purest of antiquity, tolerated polygamy on account of the hardness of Hebrew hearts. Oriental paganism proves it in the worship of the headless Venus Astaroth; Grecian and Roman paganism prove it by placing a libertine at the head of the College of Gods on Olympus; that Jupiter, of whom Juvenal sarcastically says:

"*Quam multas matres fecerit ille Deus.*"

The literature of paganism, its comedies and satires; the public and private life of ancient Athens and of Rome, and their legislation, reek with the foul odors of universal sensuality. It is true that Rome had its vestal virgins, but there were only six of them at a time in the whole empire, chosen before they were ten years of age, so young that they were not competent to make a choice, even if they had been allowed to do so. They were held in absolute bondage, and, by fear of the most dreadful punishment, forced to celibacy until they were forty, when they were free to marry. Their enforced chastity was only external, and was no proper symbol of the purity of Agnes, whose soul, by her own deliberate choice, had become the domicile of her divine Spouse. Judged by the Roman standard of that day and by the laws of climate, she was a mature woman when she made her vow, an act of heroic self-sacrifice honored in that Church alone to whose jewelled crown Agnes adds the splendor of her virtue. Even the Christian sects sneer at the vow of virginity. Their founder condemned it, and asserted that it was impossible for human nature to keep it. By his teaching and his practice he revived the pagan idea in regard to it; and the divorce laws of the modern State, as well as the erotic tendency of certain schools of modern art, literature, and drama, are the natural consequence of his loose doctrine and a further proof of the inherent concupiscence of human nature, and that the virginity of an Agnes is a purely divine gift. To no temptation would she yield. As well expect the northern blast to melt the icicle as for human love to thaw her snow-like purity. It was the divinity within that hedged her virginity from every blight. Can human nature of itself produce so fair a flower? Ye false creeds, have ye borne one tender bloom like unto this? No! it is divine; planted by the hand of God and watered by His grace. It grows only in one soil, the soil of the faith of Jesus Christ. It flourishes only in one garden, the garden of the Catholic Church. Agnes and her imitators are the exclusive property of that Church, which is hated because she makes war on the flesh, and which bids sensual humanity bow the knee in homage before the altar of the immaculate queen of virgins. The unconquerable virginity of Agnes is a divine effect which proves the divinity of the cause, the faith and grace of Jesus Christ. By that grace she was what she was, and it was not void in her.

If we consider next the martyrdom of Agnes, the proof of its divine character is equally strong. That martyrdom was a complete work of grace. As the soldier who dies for his country shows his patriotism, so does the Christian martyr prove his faith in Christ. "O blessed martyrs," exclaims St. Cyprian, "with what words shall I praise ye; oh, bravest soldiers, how shall I extol the fortitude of your hearts!" Yet not every martyrdom is a proof of truth, my dear brethren, but only that which proceeds from Christian faith and charity. Only where divine truth and divine love are the sources of the martyr's constancy under torture and in death, is he a true witness for the faith. Men have suffered death for erroneous opinions, through pride or natural obstinacy, but such are unlike the martyrs of Christ. "If I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," says St. Paul. "The mother of martyrdom," says one of the fathers, "is Catholic faith, to which illustrious athletes have subscribed with their blood." Martyrdom is the most perfect act of the greatest of the moral virtues, obedience; for it is like that of Christ, obedience even unto death. It is also the most perfect act of the chief of the theological virtues, charity; for it is the sacrifice to God of all that man holds most dear, the sacrifice of life itself. Nothing does man dread more than physical torments and death, "the fear of which," says St. Augustine, "deters even brute animals from the greatest pleasures." Yet the martyr despises torture and death through love of Christ. "The charity of Christ," says St. Maximus, "conquers in His martyrs." "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," says our Lord. The martyr is, therefore, the special friend and lover of Jesus Christ. Hence, the fathers teach, in commenting on the parable of the sower, that martyrdom is the greatest act of the love of God, and that the good ground which brings forth one hundred fold is martyrdom. "The hundred fold," says St. Augustine, "is the merit of the martyrs, as the sixtieth is the merit of the virgins, and the thirtieth of those who are married." Thus the martyrdom of Agnes was more meritorious even than her virginity. But when we consider that martyrdom in all its details, we are forced to exclaim, was ever martyr, since Christ, like unto this; was ever such fortitude, such fearless contempt of death, such sublime love of Jesus Christ! A little girl is dragged through the streets of Rome into the court of the Roman prefect. What is her offense? Can it be that this young and beautiful girl has committed some terrible crime? No; the sole charge against her is that she is a Christian, and to be a Christian was, in the eyes of the Roman law, to be a foe of the gods and a traitor to the State. It is the same old charge, my brethren, against the Church. The Roman emperors, like many more recent rulers, charged her with being disloyal because she thwarted their tyranny. They persecuted her as an enemy of the empire, when she was the very salt that would have saved it from decay. The modern State persecutes her on the same false supposition. Her only offense is, that she will not, like all human creeds, "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift may follow fawning"; but stands erect, defending true liberty of conscience, holding aloft the banner of spiritual independence which she will never lower either for hereditary despot or for the fickle mob crowned majority of a republic.

There sits the judge Symphronius, who is also the father of Procopius, the wooer of Agnes. Near by are ranged the statues of the gods and of the emperor, to which all but Christians paid idolatrous worship. The pagan priests are there, with censers, ready for those who would offer incense. In a corner burns the fire near the statue of Vesta, to which Agnes is to be asked to pay homage. The court-room is filled with the enemies of the Christian name. If they were not brutalized by pagan superstition and bigotry, the youth and beauty of this fair child would move them all to sympathy. She has, indeed, some friends and admirers in the crowd, but they are cowed by her arrest. The mere charge of Christianity against any one meant a threat of confiscation of goods, and death. The accused Christian was shunned as if he had a contagious disease. Besides, interference would have been useless, for the Roman law against Christianity was as inexorable as fate. In the centre stands Agnes, like an angel just descended from the skies, her eyes clear and lustrous as twin stars on a frosty night, her cheeks flushed with the bloom of virginal innocence, like opening roses, her lips parted in prayer, and her two hands—so tiny that no fetters could be found small enough to bind them—her two hands, like two fair lilies, clasped together in supplication, not to the earthly judge, whom she did not dread, but to the Supreme Judge, whom she feared and loved. To this Judge, "whom no king can corrupt," to whom the whole Roman empire was less important than the honor of the little girl who was His special ward, she now appealed for justice and protection. Symphronius at first tried, by gentle means, to induce Agnes to sacrifice to the gods and marry his son. Twice, three times, did he summon her before him, after giving her time for reflection, and use every means of persuasion, intermingling flattery with threats, the intercession of friends with the menaces of the law. But in vain. The judge, at length, lost patience. He could be kind no longer without being suspected of disloyalty to the gods himself. He ordered her to sacrifice to Vesta, the patroness of the so-called vestal virgins. She refused to worship what she called a deaf-and-dumb idol, a vain bit of stone. This defiance roused the bigotry and the false patriotism of the Roman judge. His paganism made him both cruel and brutal. Now, what was his sentence? "Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars." Hang down your heads in shame for human depravity, ye Christians! and ye men of the world, blush for one of the most horrible crimes ever committed by one of your sex. What was the sentence of a pagan judge upon a little girl whose only fault was that she would not sacrifice her purity or adore a piece of inanimate clay? "Let her be condemned for life to a public brothel." And the pagan crowd was silent. There was not a murmur. The Roman law authorized the sentence, Roman paganism sanctioned the execrable punishment. Where was the old Roman virtue then? Was there no descendant of Lucretia there? No son of that Roman matron who plunged the dagger into her heart at remorse for the forced desecration of the temple of her body? Was there no descendant of Virginius there, who drove the knife into his daughter's bosom rather than see her dishonored by a Roman official? Where were the sons of Scipio the Continent? Where were those old Romans who expelled the kings for just such outrages as this? Not a man lifted his voice or his arm in protest. One would think that at least Procopius, her lover, touched by her misery, would have had manhood enough to defend her from such an insult. But no! On the contrary, he exulted in her shame, and, with a crowd of libertines, followed her to the house of ill-fame. His conduct proved, my brethren, that pagan love is but another name for the most brutal sensuality. The old empire was rotting. Old Roman virility had disappeared, and paganism had destroyed conscience, virtue, and liberty. The measure of Roman iniquity was full, and Divine Providence was loosening from the leash the wild barbarians of the north, to send them in fury at their sickening quarry. "Arise, ye Goths, and glut your ire!" In the face of such a decree as this of Symphronius, how could Gibbon regret the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism? With such a black mark on his brow, how can any infidel extol it for the purpose of lowering Christianity in public esteem? Why, my brethren, the most depraved king or mob of Christian times has never done anything so vile as this Roman judge did with the sanction of imperial law. If any king or emperor or judge should now pass such a sentence, there is enough of Christian manliness left in the heart of even an apostate mob to rise in mutiny and destroy the man or the system that would authorize such brutality. Public opinion is still Christian, even though it have an infidel environment. Such has been the pervading influence of Christianity on public morals, that even infidels are dominated by it, and cannot escape its control.

"Let her be condemned for life to a public brothel!" For a moment the child staggers; a shiver of fear, like an almost imperceptible wave, passes over her graceful and fragile form. Her cheeks flush with the shame of offended modesty. But it is only the momentary weakness of terrified maidenhood in view of the infamy to which she was to be subjected. The divine in her reaffirms its power. Her Heavenly Spouse adds to her new strength and grace. She knows that no harm can come to her without His permission. They shamelessly stripped her of her clothing, as the King of Virgins had been stripped before being scourged at the pillar; but the celestial armorer of Christ, St. Michael, instantly covered her with a dazzling and impenetrable robe that protected her from the vulgar gaze, and blinded those who dared to approach her. The vile Procopius, who advanced toward her, was struck down at her feet as if by lightning. Her cruel judge then recognized her power and implored her to restore his son to life. She knelt and prayed, and her pagan lover arose, purified and converted to Christ. But the pagan mob and the pagan priests were only the more enraged when they saw her miraculous power. They were in open sedition, and cried the louder for the blood of one whom they looked upon as a sorceress. Her judge, too terrified by the fate of his son to persecute her further, and yet too cowardly to let her go free in opposition to the will of the mob, transferred her case to his unscrupulous lieutenant, Aspasius. This man condemned her to be burned alive. The fire was lighted. Agnes could still save herself by apostasy. One grain of incense offered to the false gods would have set her free. But her fortitude was divine. She mounted the pyre and stood praying, with arms extended, among the flames, like a white consecrated host in the centre of a golden chalice. The flames refused to touch her sacred flesh. Still "the Gentiles raged and the people devised vain things." Blinded by pagan superstition, they attributed her miraculous power to magic, and, although the fire went out without singeing even a hair of her head, they still demanded her life. Aspasius, to appease the people and obey the law, then ordered that she should be beheaded. She was thrown into a dungeon and loaded with chains. At last, to satisfy the longing of her heart, her Omnipotent Spouse, who had sufficiently shown His power by protecting her from insult and from the flames, decreed that she should "be dissolved and be with Christ." The executioner presents himself before her with a drawn sword. Does she shrink? does she show weakness? No, my brethren. With the light of heroism in her eye, and on her lips a smile as sweet and soft as a ray of sunlight on a bank of violets, she advances to the very edge of the flashing sword and exclaims: "Oh, what happiness! Strike! behold my bosom. Let your sword pierce to the very bottom of my heart. Spouse of Christ as I am, I shall thus escape from the darkness of earth and rise to the abode of light." Then she laid her head upon the block that was, indeed, to be her bridal pillow. The executioner, with a single stroke, freed from earth her soul, that flew quick as the lightning flash, straight to the very centre of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

Now, is not this fortitude of Agnes above the human, and contrary to it? Consider her age and her sex, and the timidity which is natural to both of them. She stood dauntless in the face of dangers that would have made even a strong man grow pale with fear. She could have avoided all of them by doing a legitimate act, by accepting an honorable offer of marriage. For, had she done so, the prefect was powerful enough to save her from the accusation of being a Christian. But neither the frowns nor the smiles of the judge, the shouts of the angry mob, the weight of fetters, the darkness of the dungeon; neither the scorching flames nor the sharp-edged sword could make her swerve from loyalty to her vow, or devotion to her faith. She died a miracle of grace not explicable by anything in nature. Her martyrdom was a complete supernatural work, a divine effect proving the divinity of the cause that produced it; the faith and charity of Jesus Christ.

Finally, my dear brethren, our devotion to St. Agnes is supernatural, and also proves the divinity of the faith of which it is the logical consequence. Consider for a moment the causes and the circumstances of this devotion. Do we worship Agnes because she possessed some extraordinary natural quality, or because she did some great deed in the natural order for her country or her fellow-men? No! It is true that her youth, her innocence, and her beauty excite our sympathy and arouse our poetic and æsthetic sentiment, as would the lustre of a jewel or the perfume and color of a rare flower. Our natural emotion in contemplating her is like that which we experience in listening to the first song of the birds in Spring, in looking at the first blossoms of the orchards in May, or in walking through a grove after a summer shower, when the boughs on every tree are glistening with diamond drops of rain; a natural feeling like to that which thrills the heart of the traveller on the Alps when he finds a flower among the ice and eternal snow, or like that which wreathes in smiles the face of a mother when she hears for the first time the prattle of her first-born. But this poetic sentiment never makes us kneel down and worship, or invoke the object that arouses it. These emotions are mere pleasant evanescent sensations and not acts of religion. Agnes never lived long enough to show forth any great mental gift, even if she had been endowed with it. She can be classed with none of those women who have been great in the State or in the Church. She was not a clever queen, like Semiramis, Zenobia, or Cleopatra. She was not a poetess, like Sappho; nor a philosopher, like her neo-platonist contemporary, Hypatia, whose praises are sounded in fiction. She was not a great writer, like St. Catherine of Sienna or St. Theresa; nor the foundress of a religious order, like St. Scholastica or St. Clare. The Maid of Orleans, indeed, imitated her fortitude. But the heroine of Domremy, who led the armies of France to victory and drove the foreign foe out of its territory, was older than Agnes, had the inspiring surroundings of the tented field to sustain her courage, died for an inferior cause—love of country, and not for the pure love of God—and could not, as Agnes could, have escaped death by apostasy. The human element of martial boldness shines through Joan's coat of mail. Men admire her purity and her enthusiasm, but they neither kneel at her shrine nor invoke her aid in their prayers, nor did God rescue her from the flames at Rouen as He saved Agnes at Rome. In Agnes we see nothing but the natural weakness of extreme youth and of the gentler sex. But behind these we see God, who hath chosen "the weak things of the world that He may confound the strong." We see the supernatural power of God, whose weakness, says the apostle, "is stronger than men." Our devotion to her is supernatural in all its motives and circumstances. Her virginity and her martyrdom, both of which we have shown to be miracles of grace, are the magnets which attract our souls to her and draw our reverent bodies to her shrine. The light of the same religious faith, and of the same divine charity for which she offered up her life, illumines our intellects and warms our hearts. Her humility confounds our pride; her virtue shames our vices; her fortitude abashes our cowardice. Behold the spectacle and tell me, ye unbelievers, if there is any explanation of it to be found in mere human nature left to its own resources and passions? See this maiden passing down the aisle of sixteen centuries, carrying in her beautiful hands two standards, one the white flag of virginal purity, the other the crimson banner of martyrdom, the two cherished ensigns of the Catholic Church. As she moves along, powerful and learned pontiffs take off their triple-crowned tiaras, holy bishops lay aside their mitres, mighty emperors and great kings lay down their sceptres and crowns and unite with millions of the most enlightened portion of mankind in bending the knee before her in homage, invoke her intercession, and would deem it a privilege to be allowed to kiss even the hem of her garments. Ah! my brethren, these facts, which we witness even still, this worship of a simple maiden who was put to death sixteen hundred years ago, has no parallel in history outside of the order of grace. It is a miracle of the moral order, and we know who and what has wrought it. Its adequate explanation is found in the incarnate Christ alone. It is the effect of His divine power, a blossom of that supernatural faith which, in the language of the Council of Trent, is "the root and foundation of all justification." It is another proof of the divinity of Christ and of His Church.

And so again we hail thee, O Agnes, thou miracle of grace, sweet patroness of this parish and of this people, and say, blessed be thy name! Blessed art thou, white rose of the fourth century, turned into crimson by thy own martyr's blood. From heaven extend over all of us thy saintly hands in benediction! Bless the fathers and the mothers of this congregation, that they may bring up their children like unto thee! Bless the little children, that they may imitate the purity of thy life and thy fearlessness in professing the faith of their fathers; and bless him, too, who to-day begins the duty of guiding this flock on the narrow way that leads to the abode of the beatified, in which thou shinest as a most brilliant star! May the blessing of St. Agnes and of her divine Spouse, Jesus Christ, descend on you and abide with you forever! *Amen.*

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